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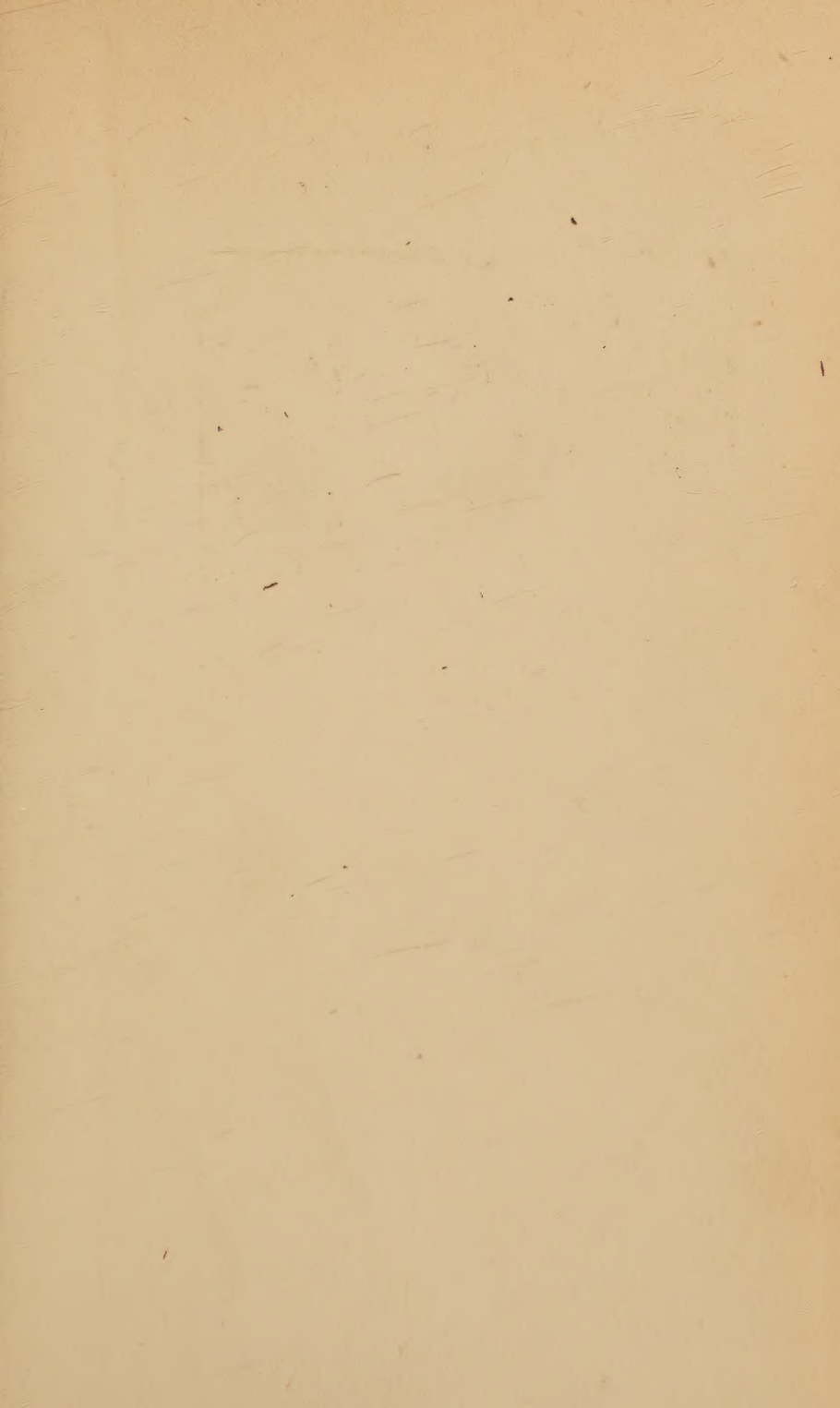
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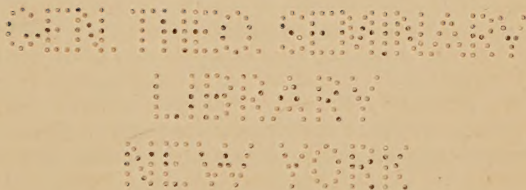
# STONES OF STUMBLING

An Examination of Some Religious  
Difficulties, being a sequel to  
“The Manuscripts of God”

BY

A. I. TILLYARD

*M.A. St. John's College, Cambridge.*



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## PREFACE

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*Stones of Stumbling* defends, explains and amplifies what had been laid down in the *Manuscripts of God*. The plan followed is to deal with certain difficulties. In so doing other aspects of questions already touched upon come into view, and fresh light is thus thrown upon the nature of religion. In this second volume I have had the same class of readers in mind as in the first, i.e. young persons who are beginning to think for themselves. There is, therefore, the same simplicity of statement. In the two books the reader is presented with a small scale map of a very large area of thought. Small scale maps can give only the outlines of oceans and continents; they cannot plumb the depths of the one, or display the hidden riches of the other, but they have their place if they are used for what they are. Incidentally I have had other aims beside giving such a general outline, and I am glad that this fact has already been perceived in certain quarters. An author soon becomes aware that reviewers study a book with varying degrees of thoroughness. Some read a book through; others confine themselves to the preface and dip into the pages here and there. Occasionally reviewers fail even to get an accurate knowledge of the title-page, and make mistakes both as to the name and the identity of the writer. Those who have read my previous book through have seen that it is apologetic, and have declared that it is here on right lines. *Stones of Stumbling* is also constructive, and gives indications of the way in which I think Christian teaching will have to be re-stated. Finally, I have aimed at providing a basis for Christian unity. If I might take a motto for the whole I would adapt the words of St. Paul and say: "Now abideth Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, these three; but the greatest of these is goodness."





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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SOCIAL STUMBLING-STONE.

ONE of the most startling phenomena of modern times is the existence, in the so-called Christian nations, of large groups of persons who are not merely irreligious, but anti-religious. The Social Democratic Party, which constitutes by far the most powerful political group in Germany, is conspicuous for its anti-religious bias, and it has its counterpart, more or less formidable, wherever Western civilisation prevails.

The arguments used to support this hostile position are short and simple. Modern society, so it is alleged, is based upon injustice. The Christian Churches everywhere exist to buttress up society, injustice and all. Nay, they do worse. They seek to divert men's minds from the wrongs they suffer here below by the promise of happiness hereafter. If ever the democracy is to have its rights in this world, these visions of future bliss must be entirely dissipated. Such a frame of mind obviously prevents the man who is under its influence from paying attention to any argument whatever in favour of religion. Here then is a stumbling-block, or rather wall of offence, which must be removed out of the way before Christianity can so much as get a hearing.

The serious part of the matter is that the accusations mentioned above have a large amount of truth in them. As we can always see our neighbours' sins and shortcomings more clearly than we can see our own, it will be best to look abroad for facts in confirmation of this statement. Take Russia for example. The Czar is the Head of the Church as well as of the State. The Procurator of the Holy Synod, who is the Church's chief executive officer, is his creature. The Church in Russia is thus part and parcel of the State. It has acquiesced in and must share the responsibility for secret police methods, arbitrary arrests, biassed tribunals, exile to Siberia, and all the other devices and practices of irresponsible tyranny. Has

it ever raised the faintest word of protest against any of these enormities? No wonder then that Russian reformers tend to be at once revolutionary and atheistic.<sup>1</sup>

Take Germany. Is the attitude of the Lutheran Church, as the official religious organisation, very much more favourable to fundamental social reform than that of the Orthodox Church across its eastern border? In answering this question we must remember that Germany looks upon itself as the home of all that is highest and best which it comprehends under the single word "culture." It regards the Russians as semi-barbarians, and must therefore be judged by a higher standard. The Lutheran Church stands for German society as it is.

In France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Portugal there is the same anti-religious mass of people. In France, where it is very large, the Prime Minister himself is an ex-Social Democrat. He has abandoned his Socialism, but not his opposition to religion. All the countries in this list are Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholic Church stands for society as it is.

At home the feeling of hostility may not be so marked, nor the breach so wide, but the bulk of the working-classes admittedly stand outside the Churches. Religion has no attraction for them; they have no use for it. Have they any justification for this view in what goes on around them? While the first draft of these pages was being written, there was a strike in Dublin, and certain notable incidents happened. Some kindly disposed English Protestants wished to remove the strikers' children from their miserable surroundings, and lodge them in their own comfortable homes in this country. The Roman Catholic priests were up in arms at once, and they and a section of the parents were speedily at cross purposes, the one side being determined that the children should stay, and the other side being desirous that they should go. So the Press was provided with much good copy as the battle went on.

What was the motive of this action on the part of the priests? The children in question were badly clothed and worse fed; they lived in houses some of which, judged by English standards, were

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that this paragraph was written before the Russian Revolution of 1917.



unfit for human habitation; they were exposed to the ravages of consumption, fever, and other deadly diseases. All this was true, but at the same time they were safe from heresy. In England there was the infection of false doctrine which can destroy the soul in hell. What do privations, what do sickness and death matter, if only that supreme disaster can be averted, and the bliss of Heaven come at last to make up infinitely and to all eternity for our sufferings and sorrows here below? So this strange state of things came about that, in the name of the Lord Jesus, who loved little children, and cared for the bodies as well as the souls of men, the priests, His followers, condemned those helpless ones to remain imprisoned in their miserable surroundings. In so doing they went against the instinct of common humanity, against the promptings of pity and helpfulness which rise spontaneously in the hearts of men. Not that the priests in question were destitute of or despised these feelings. On the contrary, they regard them as altogether praiseworthy, and would doubtless have acted on them had there been no question of orthodoxy in the matter. The Roman Catholic Church on this occasion was determined to justify the accusation of the Social Democrats. Nay more, such seems to be its settled policy. It can build fine churches in villages of unspeakable poverty, but, like all the rest of the religious bodies, it is helpless in the face of a slum. What can be more dangerous or damaging than to set this world and the next at daggers drawn, and in the name of religion to fight against natural affection?

Nor are we in England in a position to cast very many weighty or well-aimed stones at our neighbours across the Channel. Is there any Church which, in its organised capacity, must not be regarded as an upholder of the existing state of society? The Church of England must of a certainty be so accounted, and so, in a lesser degree, must all the Free Churches. A number of individuals in these various bodies utter occasional protests, and pious opinions are, from time to time, embodied in official resolutions, but the net influence of the Churches, as a whole, is on the side of things as they are. The working classes feel this, and keep outside.

Here is a characteristic and impartial protest against a single sin of society:—"The vast, invisible ocean of air in which we live . . .

is really a most complex structure, and wonderful piece of machinery as it were, which may be truly considered to be the very source and foundation of life itself. . . . Yet it is among those nations that claim to be the most civilised, those that profess to be guided by a knowledge of the laws of nature, those that most glory in the advance of science, that we find the greatest apathy, the greatest recklessness, in continually rendering impure this all-important necessary of life, to such a degree that the health of the larger portion of their populations is injured and their vitality lowered, by conditions which compel them to breathe more or less foul and impure air for the greater part of their lives. The huge and ever-increasing cities, the vast manufacturing towns belching forth smoke and poisonous gases, with the crowded dwellings, where millions are forced to live under the most terrible insanitary conditions, are the witnesses to this criminal apathy, this incredible recklessness and inhumanity.

"For the last fifty years and more the inevitable results of such conditions have been fully known; yet to this day nothing of importance *has* been done, nothing *is* being done. In this beautiful land there is ample space and a superabundance of pure air for every individual. Yet our wealthy and our learned classes, our rulers and law-makers, our religious teachers and our men of science, all alike devote their lives and energies to anything or everything but this. Yet *this* is the one great and primary essential of a people's health and well-being, to which *everything* should, for the time, be subordinate. Till this is done, and done thoroughly and completely, our civilisation is naught, our science is naught, our religion is naught, and our politics are less than naught—are utterly despicable and below contempt."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wallace, *Man's Place in the Universe*, pp. 258-260.

## CHAPTER II.

### SOCIETY BASED ON SELFISHNESS.

How stands the truth of the matter? Are the Socialists right when they say that Society is based on injustice? Have both Science and Politics been so blind to the facts of the case that they are naught? Are the Churches as heedless and neglectful as they are said to be? Is religion an immoral opiate dulling the souls of men into the abandonment of their natural and inalienable rights? These are questions which must be faced and answered.

It will be remembered that in our brief reading in the Book of Nature we discerned two forces at work—Hunger and Love. Hunger comes first and leads to the struggle for existence; then Love modifies it in the form of mutual helpfulness. The struggle for existence so long as it affects the plant world, or animals which cannot look before and after, may be regarded with composure, but when it comes to a struggle for existence between human beings who feel and think and remember and imagine, the idea of mere struggle becomes intolerable. Nature happily has foreseen our difficulty and prepared against it by having ready a new and more merciful force—that of mutual helpfulness.

In the social order, as it now exists, the lower principle still reigns supreme. Society is based on hunger leading to the struggle for existence. The struggle is modified by the second and higher principle. It is this modification and alleviation which, in a sense, does all the mischief, because it blinds men's eyes to the real state of the case. Modern commercialism is war, wherein the insolvent, the bankrupt, the unsuccessful, the underpaid, the sweated, and the unemployed represent the dead, the wounded, the dying and the sick. Into this war the rank and file are driven by the whip of hunger. Among the actual combatants there are clean fighters and foul fighters, but they are all fighters. There is also much Red Cross work going on in the shape of private charity and good works; nay more, the State is now taking on itself the part of King

Bountiful with its National Insurance Scheme and its Old Age Pensions to the war-worn veterans of industry. The well-to-do fix their gaze on the Red Cross work, public and private, and are so lost in admiration of it that they fail to see the internecine strife which lies beneath. Even the Red Cross work awakens a fear in the breasts of some, lest it should pass the bounds of prudence. One hears the question, "Is not too much being done for the working-classes nowadays"?

What shall we say to these things? First, then, let us assert once more, with all the emphasis at our command, that competition, in the shape of the struggle for existence and the weakest going to the wall, is not only unchristian but anti-Christian. "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost" is, as it purports to be, pure Devil's doctrine, however much its nakedness is concealed by specious words or charitable works. There is but one kind of competition recognised in the New Testament. It is to be found in the text "Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Compete in love of your neighbour, and in nothing else. Undeniably God has made men to differ. Are you superior to your brother in physical strength, or skill, or intellect, or opportunity, or inherited possessions? You must not use these advantages for selfish ends; for where much is given, much is required. In love we must serve one another.

A vital difference of opinion is here revealed. Two opposite and hostile conceptions of Society stand facing each other, and there can be no truce between them. What then is the bottom ground of the Christian quarrel with the existing order of things? A recent Roman Catholic apologist for the present system says that it is "the unjust distribution of property," and adds, "The injustice that exists is admittedly not universal. It is not even the general rule, but only the exception. The connexion between the existing methods and the cases of injustice is purely accidental, and the most that can be proved against the present economic system is that, like many other good things, it is liable to, and has suffered abuse."<sup>1</sup> In opposition to this view it is here urged that the injustice is not accidental, but essential.

<sup>1</sup> Day, *Catholic Democracy, Individualism, and Socialism*, p. 139.



The existing economic system is production for profit. To make a profit you must "buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest"; you must get as much as you can, and give as little as you can. Whatever profit you make is your own, to have and to hold, to use as a further advantage in the battle, and to bequeath to your successors, so that the economic advantage shall not cease with yourself. The motive force, which thus materialises itself in private property, is selfishness, the greed of gain, the desire to possess. Father Day practically admits that it is so. "At present the work of supply and demand, including all production, distribution and exchange, is effected by the voluntary co-operation of individuals who freely determine their own needs, and conduct their business as they judge best. In so doing they ordinarily seek their own interests."<sup>1</sup> Now to found Society on selfishness in this fashion is a serious matter, especially from the Christian point of view. Father Day himself seems to have a trace of this thought in his mind. He says "at present," hinting perhaps that the future has better things in store for us. Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." And He added in another place, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and the fruit corrupt." Selfishness is the fundamental defect of human nature, and a tree rooted in it and growing out of it is a corrupt tree, and cannot bring forth good fruit. Such a tree is commercialism, whether ancient or modern. It is the redeeming features of our social system which are accidental; they are the product of the spirit of unselfishness and of mutual helpfulness, which is good and which modifies in some degree the effects of self-seeking, but the root, the fundamental principle, the moving force, to vary the illustration, is evil and its fruits are evil.

Christ's criterion of trees is also to be found in the Sermon on the Mount. "Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them." What are the fruits of commercialism, of production for profit? Surely it is a significant fact, enough to give pause to the most frivolous, that the social machine has, on more than one occasion during the past few years, been within measurable distance of

<sup>1</sup> Day, *Catholic Democracy, Individualism, and Socialism*, p. 151.

coming to a standstill. A railway strike, a coal strike, carried to a certain point, would paralyse Society. The result no doubt would be like Samson's fate in the temple of the Philistines; the workers would involve themselves in the general ruin, but it is general ruin that would come about. What is the cause of strikes? Conflicting interests, rival self-seekings. The employers try to get all they can, the workers try to get all they can. It is the game of "pull devil, pull baker." Self-seeking not only embroils employers and workers; it embroils the workers with one another. "That is our job," says one set; "It is not," says another. Then "down tools" says the first.

One would have thought that the war with its threat of unspeakable calamity, of supreme disaster, would have reconciled employers and employed, and the workers themselves to one another. Not so. I pen these lines in the fifteenth month of the war; and strikes are still going on. A special correspondent of *The Times*,<sup>1</sup> writing from Birmingham, demands the elimination of the employer. "In those districts where labour troubles are acute—and unfortunately they are the most important districts—an essential condition for their removal is the suspension of the normal relations between employers and employed. So long as they remain, anything else that is done will be viewed by the men through the distorted medium of standing mistrust and antagonism. Every measure will be regarded as a concealed dodge to benefit the employers and get the better of themselves."

*The Times*, commenting on this communication, said, "The root of (these difficulties) is the principle of economic competition which Socialists desire to abolish, but which other people believe to be the only thing that keeps us all up to the mark and moving forwards on the path inscribed 'Progress.' That may be so in ordinary times, but in the presence of the supreme competition, which this war is, the other domestic competition loses all virtue and becomes a curse. There is no longer any need for its stimulus or any room for it. Thus employers compete with each other for orders and for labour, with the result that they daily disorganise each other's business, make the men restless, run wages up to an

<sup>1</sup> June 10, 1915.

absurd pitch of extravagance, which will fall on the tax-payers, and stimulate an insatiable appetite for more. Then employers and employed compete for the division of the spoils; hence disputes and strikes, limitation of output, and bad work. Further, one skilled trade competes with another for the division of the work, and we get the demarcation disputes that cause so many cases of 'down tools.' Finally, the skilled men compete with the unskilled, the organised with the unorganised, the men with the women; and this conflict is the most fatal of all."<sup>1</sup>

The distinction drawn in this extract between war time and peace time will not hold. War only brings out more clearly the evils inseparable from the competitive system. In peace time we make shift to bear them; in war time they become intolerable. They remind one of the fights between the Jewish factions during the siege of Jerusalem which went on after the Romans had built their wall round the doomed city.

The fruits then of the competitive system are manifest—deep and inveterate suspicion between employers and employed, resulting in chronic warfare between the two, labour divided against itself, lock-outs, strikes, sweating, unemployment, poverty, workhouses, slums, excessive infant mortality, disease, lunacy, death; and on the other side excessive wealth, burdening its possessors, or leading to insensate luxury and extravagance.

Across the Atlantic the evolutionary process has reached a further stage. There the victors in the fight have come together, and, by a monstrous parody of the principle of mutual helpfulness, have combined to eliminate all competition hostile to themselves. Of them it may be said as of the despot king of old, "Whom they will, they slay, and whom they will, they keep alive." Then, with the aid of a protective tariff, they proceed to plunder the sovereign people at their leisure.

Many people will hasten to condemn all this as wild exaggeration, but I have been in business myself, and I know something about it. My own firm opinion is that no Christian man has ever been engaged for long in a competitive business (where his hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him) without doing many

<sup>1</sup> June 14, 1915.

things he would have liked not to do, and leaving undone many things he would have liked to do. He may desire to love his neighbour as himself, but he dwells in the midst of people who are out to do the best they can for themselves, and he must do as they do, or go under. Take the dismissal of old servants, for example. Here is a man who entered your service at fifteen, and has faithfully worked for you forty-five years. But he is not the man he was; he is too old at sixty. (We are familiar with the cry, "too old at forty," and a most significant cry it is.) You can no longer make a profit out of him. You would like to keep him, but you cannot afford it. All your competitors employ younger and more efficient men. Away with the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.

In these strictures on commercial morality I should like to fortify myself with a concrete example, that of Francis Crossley.<sup>1</sup> Francis Crossley's first experience of individualism and private enterprise was the buying of a business by his brother and himself. When they came to look into it they found it was declining and heavily laden with bad debts. They had given too much for it, but then they ought to have been wider awake to their own interests, and anyhow the seller made a correspondingly advantageous bargain. Next they bought the patent rights of the "Otto" gas engine. These had to be constantly defended in the law courts against unscrupulous persons who wanted to get what was not theirs without paying for it. On one occasion the Crossley firm won an action at the cost to themselves of £10,000. The defendant firm immediately went into bankruptcy, and not a penny could be got out of it. Francis Crossley soon began to feel uneasiness of conscience. An order was received for some iron moulds in which rubber goods were to be manufactured, with the instruction that the name of a London firm was to be cut inside them, and not the name of the real makers. This is a constant practice in business, but Francis objected to it. Nor did he find gas-engine making without difficulties. He would not have one of his engines employed in hoisting a barrel of beer or spirits, nor in making electricity to light a theatre or a public-house. In his perplexity he

<sup>1</sup> See *The Life of Francis William Crossley*, by Dr. J. Rendel Harris, especially Chapter III., "Machinery and Religion."



wrote to Dr. McLaren, of Manchester. "Is it right," he asked, "to sell engines to brewers? . . . In my mind I draw a line between selling a brewer a loaf, or a coat, and selling him an article which he wants for his morals-destroying trade. . . . Two things may be argued: (1) If you will not sell to brewers for brewing, you should not hold railway shares, for railways carry their beer. It is a question of drawing the line. (2) You must, if consistent, stop selling to theatres, gunmakers, &c., *i.e.* to all trades whose products are often used in ways you condemn. Well, perhaps we must. . . . There is another strong practical ground of argument against this line of business—the sending out our men to breweries or theatres to erect our engines is bad. It exposes them to temptation."

Dr. McLaren, who was a better expositor of the first great commandment than of the second, replied that the question was a difficult one, and that he had never thought about it. His attempted solution was that while you should ask some questions about what buyers did with your goods, you should not ask too many. No wonder that Crossley ended by abandoning business altogether, rather than be continually compromising with conscience. Not that I believe that this course ought to be generally followed. Politicians, for example, have from time to time to compromise with conscience, compromise being, we are told the essence of politics. But if all honest men got out of politics, we should be governed by knaves and thieves, and our last state would be worse than our first. There are some men with scruples too fine for business; let them retire from it; there are some occupations in which no conscientious man can be engaged; let them be altogether eschewed. But ordinary persons, in ordinary businesses, had better stay where they are and do the best they can. They may at least stop things from getting worse, and in the meantime they can speak the truth about existing social conditions, and so prepare the way for something better.

Crossley, in his perplexity, appealed, as we have seen, to his minister, who replied he had never given the matter a thought. Crossley's biographer remarks in parenthesis "That, dear Doctor, is the trouble with most of us." Do Christian ministers realise that commercialism has but one moral standard? Those who act

according to that standard ask themselves but one question, "Can I make a profit?" This they must do while men in business seek their own interests. Let us take a concrete example of how the system works under fair average conditions. A local education authority has to build a new elementary school. Here we come on the principle of mutual helpfulness, the provision of gratuitous education by the community, the strong (financially) bearing the burden of the weak, and not pleasing themselves, *i.e.* they content themselves with grumbling at the rates. Mr. Simple, a new member, proposes that the job be given to Smith & Co.; he knows them for a most respectable firm, and the local authority will be quite safe in their hands. His suggestion is received with derisive laughter. Alderman Worldly Wiseman says he has had longer experience of business than Mr. Simple. There was not a firm in existence he would trust to charge just what it pleased. What would the public say if they did not safeguard its interests better than that? He moved that tenders be advertised for. This is carried *nem. con.*, Mr. Simple not voting.

Here the local authority, which is but following the universal practice, "entirely rejects the idea that any business man will love his neighbour as himself, and charge a fair price for a good article, and in so judging it feels it has the public behind it. What does asking for tenders mean? It means that the authority will, for the protection of those it represents, play upon the greed of gain inherent in the local builders. The greediest of all, *i.e.* he who will be content with the lowest gain rather than let the other builders take it from him, will send in the lowest tender, and this will be accepted.

The sequel is interesting. The two chief items in the tender will be labour and materials. The builder, to make his profit, will have to cut down wages to the lowest possible point, and use the cheapest possible materials. The scandal of low wages for contract work has been so great that what is known as a "fair wages clause" is now generally inserted in public contracts. It binds contractors not to depress wages below the market level, but it is a very sorry substitute for the spirit of equity and the love of one's neighbour. As for materials the local authority will live in constant fear of

scamped work, so they will appoint a clerk of the works to see that there is no cheating, and they will expect the architect to supplement the efforts of the clerk of the works. Even so, they will not be safe, for if the job is a big one it may be worth the contractor's while to pay the clerk of the works a handsome commission not to see what he ought to see. There is a law against such commissions, a society with a committee and officers to insure that the law is enforced, and so we go on trusting selfishness and then distrusting it, and seeking in a variety of ways to nullify its natural results. The contractors too occasionally overreach themselves, and go into the bankruptcy court, because they have ruined themselves in their eagerness to get business, and what they thought was a good connexion. Surely mankind in its upward progress will evolve a better system than is here depicted.

Commercialism on its darker side is horrible to contemplate. It makes rifles and sells them to frontier tribes in India to fight the British forces with. It manufactures gin and sells it to the negroes in Africa. What matters if one's own countrymen lose their lives in the one case, and our black neighbours their lives in the other, so long as both transactions show a profit? How about the drink traffic at home, which aggravates so enormously every evil and misery from which the body politic suffers? It conforms to the one law of commercialism. It is profitable.

There is the Stock Exchange, for further example, one of our most respected and time-honoured institutions. It would shrink, we are told, to a fraction of its ordinary dimensions were it not for what is known as "speculative business." From the point of view of the community all this business is unproductive. One man's gain always means another man's loss. It is a pure game of "beggar my neighbour." What a practical commentary on the second great commandment! The magnitude of the transactions in question is enormous. The present war has put an end to speculation for the time being, and has revealed the interesting fact that the banks have advanced some £80,000,000 to brokers and jobbers to help them in their operations. What these operations are the banks do not inquire. They ask but the one question, "Shall we make a profit?"

The members of the Stock Exchange could tell some queer stories. Here is a company formed to bring out an invention of undoubted utility to the public. Success does not come as quickly as was hoped, and more capital is needed. The "bears," gentlemen who spend their lives in selling what they have not got, get wind of this state of affairs. They "bang" the shares, and spread exaggerated rumours of the difficulties of the company. The company cannot raise the necessary capital, and is forced into liquidation. The shareholders lose their money and the public loses the useful invention, but what matter? The "bears" buy the shares at a nominal figure and pocket the difference between the two prices. They have made a profit, and, from their point of view, all is for the best in the best possible world.

Or take the reverse case. Here is an invention of more than doubtful value, but it is in the hands of a syndicate of rich men. A prospectus is issued, couched in alluring terms, but keeping just within the limits of the law. Shares are allotted, and are quoted at a premium in a sham market. By these and other devices the syndicate "unloads" on a credulous public. When they have unloaded, the company goes into liquidation, and the money of the gulled victims goes with it. But the syndicate has made its profit. What more would you have? Are not these things merely phases of the struggle for existence?

I cannot help thinking that these lamentable phenomena and the moral obtuseness which takes them as a matter of course, constitute instances of the penalty which has to be paid for beginning religion at the top. Those who start with Heaven are so enamoured of it that they keep gazing ever upwards and fail to perceive the wrongs and injustices of earth. There are, we read, two great commandments, but why should the Churches concentrate on the one and neglect the other? One cannot help wondering at and admiring the provision made by them to help mankind in obeying the first. There is the extraordinary variety of public services from the austere simplicity of the Friends, to the amazing elaborations of Catholic ceremonial, there is praise, and prayer, and the reading and exposition of the Bible, there is the memory of the saints and martyrs, the learning of scholars and divines, and the



eloquence of the preachers setting before their hearers the highest ideals, but how little in it all is taught to help in the love of one's neighbour. But those who begin religion from below, meet the second great commandment at the outset, according to the Scripture which says, "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?"

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE REMEDY.

WHAT then is the remedy? We have seen that the two forces which move the world are Love and Hunger. Love gives us co-operation, hunger produces competition. But hunger, when modified by the sense of justice for oneself, becomes the love of liberty, and when transformed by the sense of justice towards others, is the source of progress. So both love and hunger are to be retained, but instead of the struggle for existence being modified by mutual helpfulness, mutual helpfulness must reign supreme, but be saved from sinking into stagnation by the love of liberty and the desire for progress. In other words, competition must give place to co-operation, and co-operation be so ordered as to afford scope for individual enterprise and initiative. They who have turned the world upside down must come hither also, and do for society what they have already done for religion.

How easy it is to write down these generalities, but what a task is here sketched out, not only for the statesman and the reformer, but for the Churches as well. For, if I mistake not, the difficulty is a religious difficulty; it is inward and spiritual, and therefore cannot be dealt with save by inward and spiritual means.

It is an old and trite saying that as the materials are, so is the building, but the truth of it is still very imperfectly realized. Herbert Spencer puts it thus: "Out of bricks, well-burnt, hard, and sharp-angled, lying in heaps by his side, the bricklayer builds, even without mortar, a wall of some height that has considerable stability. With bricks made of bad materials, irregularly burnt, warped, cracked, and many of them broken, he cannot build a dry wall of the same height and stability. The dockyard labourer, piling cannon-shot, is totally unable to make these spherical masses stand as the bricks stand. There are, indeed, certain definite

shapes into which they may be piled—that of a tetrahedron, or that of a pyramid having a square base, or that of an elongated wedge allied to the pyramid. In any of these forms they may be put together symmetrically and stably; but not in forms with vertical sides or highly inclined sides. Once more, if, instead of equal spherical shot, the masses to be piled are boulders, partially but irregularly rounded and of various sizes, no definite stable form is possible. A loose heap, indefinite in its surface and angles, is all the labourer can make of them. Putting these several facts together, and asking what is the most general truth they imply, we see it to be this—that the character of the aggregate is determined by the character of the units.”<sup>1</sup> Carlyle expressed the same idea in his own characteristic way when he said that the most cunningly contrived ballot box would never extract an honest man from a nation of rogues. If the individuals are all selfish, how can we build up an unselfish community? The individuals must be changed or they can make no progress towards our ideal.

The competitive system may be based on selfishness, but it has one great argument in its favour—it works. Like the Car of Juggernaut, it crushes many a victim in its lumbering course, but it moves. Viewed as a machine it stands based on and built into a vast antiquity. No one has any experience of a different order of things. History does not record a single successful experiment in Socialism, and the traces of property held in common are on too small a scale, or too remote, to be of any practical value.<sup>2</sup> Could mutual helpfulness keep the social mechanism going? It could not until men have learned to love their neighbours as themselves.

This again is no new argument, and the Socialists are ready with their reply. Since the days of Robert Owen (who founded himself on Rousseau), they have laid the emphasis on environment, not on character. Men are naturally good, so runs the reasoning, they only become bad through bad surroundings; improve the surroundings and all will be well. It is the old difficulty—man and his surroundings; which is the stronger? Here science seems to

<sup>1</sup> *Study of Sociology*, Chap. III., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. such as are given in Laveleye, *Primitive Property*.

be coming to our help with its message not to pit the one against the other. It recognizes both factors, the organism and its environment, but it is looking more and more to the persistence of some originative impulse within the organism itself for the explanation of the evolutionary process. We shall do well to recognize both factors also, and to put the emphasis in the same place. It is in the mind of man that the decisive battle is fought and the victory finally won.

Another school of Socialist looks to force as the instrument whereby to effect the necessary change in human nature. Its motto is "Be my brother, or I will slay you." This view can be made clear by a brief quotation: "With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic, definite organisation. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then, for the first time, man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones. . . . It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom."<sup>1</sup>

The opening sentence of the above extract is ominous. The word "seizing" implies violence. Violence on one side provokes violence on the other, and always leaves a sense of injustice rankling in the heart of the defeated party. Can the New Jerusalem be built on such a foundation as this? As the Socialistic State is to begin with a supreme act of force, so it is to be kept going by force. Herr Engels, in spite of his fine talk about freedom, admits by implication that it is so. According to him the struggle for individual existence is to disappear, but there is to be "systematic definite organization," in other words a compulsion as stern and unbending as that of the German Army. But perhaps German army discipline was Engels' idea of liberty. It is not the British idea.

State Socialism has for its motto "a place for every man, and every man in his place." It is the regimentation of society. That

<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, quoted in Kidd, *Social Evolution*, p. 214.



is all very well for a man who is out of a place himself, and sees his neighbours in comfortable positions, but what about the square man who, in a socialistic system, finds himself thrust into a round hole without the slightest regard to his angularities? This will prove a painful process. So long as human nature remains as it is there will be great eagerness for the soft jobs, but there will be a difficulty about the numberless hard, disagreeable, or dangerous jobs, which must be done, or the machine come to a standstill. The only course left is to use compulsion, to make people do what they dislike doing, in other words the State will have to be organized on a military model. But when State Socialism in this form stalks in at the door, liberty flies out at the window. The "Coming Slavery" has arrived. State Socialism is at best compulsory co-operation, which comes near to being a contradiction in terms. Co-operation to be worthy of the name must be voluntary, and so we come back to the love of our neighbour as the one thing needful for a regenerated society. "The struggle for individual existence," Engels tells us, "is to disappear." The disappearance demands a change of character of the most startling description among millions upon millions of the most enterprising people the world has ever seen. If a change of character is what is wanted, why not try to make Christians of these multitudes while we are about it?

Finally it may be noted that the conception underlying this imaginary society is purely materialistic. Production no longer masters the producer, but the producer masters production. Everybody is to be provided with the good things of this life. This is the pig-philosophy of which Carlyle was so contemptuous, the ideals of which are a sty well-strawed and a trough well-filled. A society framed on these lines, and deprived of the stimulus of personal enterprise and initiative, would speedily languish and ultimately perish of the corruption bred by its own ease and comfort.

If then the call is for a higher type of morality, for a larger sense of public duty, to what source can we look for these things so hopefully as to religion? The second great commandment is inseparably bound up with the first. Voices from the various religious bodies will be heard in reply, "We too believe that changed men are necessary for a changed society, and that is why we preach

the gospel, pure and simple, the only remedy for human ills." There is reason in this reply, but the matter must be pushed further. Co-operation is the Christian word, and the Church with its gospel has been preaching it all along implicitly, if not always explicitly. This teaching has borne fruit. A wonderful change has come over the Christian way of looking at things during the last hundred years. Even as late as Paley the idea prevailed that the world at large was a hopeless place, that its ills could never be cured, nor its wrongs righted, and that the only aspiration of a Christian was to escape as speedily as possible from the scene of sin and woe to Heaven above, where alone rest and peace could be found. But at the close of the eighteenth century there was a great outburst of the missionary spirit, and Protestant Christianity set itself at last to do its share in conquering the world for Christ. My own view is that the desire to save the heathen abroad re-acted on Christian people's views about the ignorant and the oppressed at home, and that the religious revival helped the humanitarian revival which, beginning with the reform of the criminal code, protective legislation for child labour in factories, and the abolition of the slave trade, has since then made such astonishing progress, and spread into so many different channels.

Be this as it may, the social conscience, stimulated by Christian teaching has outrun and got ahead of the social organization. It cannot tolerate things as they are; it is insistent in its demand for a better order. This is the main reason for the present social unrest; at bottom it is religious. The people are now looking for further guidance; cannot the Churches recognize this fact, and give what is meekly but persistently asked? They have laid the foundation; will they not have the courage to build on it?

In making this appeal we do not ask religious teachers and preachers to go outside their proper limits, and usurp the functions which belong to others. For social improvement, as for all other improvement, three things are necessary: the first is to see that the existing state of things is bad; the second is to generate the emotional and moral force necessary to alter it; and the third is to guide this force wisely and well, on sound lines, and to good ends. This last task is for statesmen and politicians. We look to the Churches to

do the first two things. They can face the facts of the case courageously and tell Society the unwelcome truth that it is based on selfishness, and that the principle of competition is not only anti-social but anti-Christian. So long as the Churches are blind to the facts and fail to make their protest, they are acquiescing in, and consenting to what is wrong, and are thereby aiding and abetting it. Nothing would do more to reach the alienated multitude than the taking up of a clear and unmistakable attitude on this fundamental point of the radical injustice of Society.

But the Churches must not only cease to do evil; they must learn to do well. The second commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" carries a very long way. It carries much farther than most religious people at present dream. It touches every detail of social organization. It is, in fact, the most revolutionary formula in the world. We look to the Churches for teaching on these matters, for denunciation of actual wrong-doing, for stimulus and exhortation to every kind of social right-doing. The spirit of the old Hebrew prophets needs to be reincarnated among us. Under such an inspiration the Church would have to quarrel with the world as it did in the first three centuries, the period of its greatest and most glorious achievements. It compromised with the world in the days of Constantine, and it has been compromising with it ever since. High time it is that the quarrel should break out afresh.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHURCHES AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE.

IN the foregoing chapters severe strictures have been passed on the Christian Churches for their blindness to the fundamental injustice of the existing social order. Such strictures ought not to be made unless they can be substantiated. I return therefore to the subject, and propose in this chapter to examine more fully the social teaching of one particular Church—the Roman Catholic. Roman Catholicism has two advantages for us, it represents the belief of by far the largest single part of Christendom, and it knows its own mind in this matter as it does in most things.

Its chief pronouncement in recent times is to be found in the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII., known as *Rerum Novarum*, published on May 15th, 1891. This pronouncement was followed by a second Encyclical on January 15th, 1901, *Graves de Communi*, which further defined and enforced the teaching of the first. The following are the main points The Church believes in "Christian Democracy."<sup>1</sup> Christian Democracy, says Father Day, "is an organized social movement based on the principles and ideals of Catholic faith and action, and conducted under the guidance of ecclesiastical authority, to help the poor and the working classes. It is exclusively social and entirely Catholic."<sup>2</sup> Or in the actual and more detailed language of the Pope, "Christian Democracy ought to have as its foundation the principles laid down by Divine faith, having regard, indeed, to the temporal advantage of the poorer and less educated, but designing therewith to fit their minds for the enjoyment of things eternal. Accordingly, to *Christian Democracy* let there be nothing more sacred than law and right; let it bid the right of having and holding to be kept inviolate; let it maintain the diversity of ranks, which properly belongs to a well-ordered State; in fine

<sup>1</sup> These details are taken from Father Day's *Catholic Democracy*.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 12.



let it prefer for human society that form and character which its Divine Author has imposed upon it. . . .

"Far be it from anyone to pervert the name of *Christian Democracy* to political ends. For although Democracy, by its very name and by philosophical usage, denotes popular rule, yet in this application it must be employed altogether without its political significance, so as to denote nothing whatever besides this beneficent Christian action upon the people. . . .

"Just in the same way must Christian Democracy repudiate another ground of offence, which arises from paying so much regard to the interests of the poorer and weaker classes as to seem to overlook the wealthier and more powerful, who are nevertheless of equal importance to the preservation and development of the State. The Christian law of Charity forbids this. . . .

"Finally, we again enjoin, and with greater insistence, that whatever schemes people take up in the popular cause, whether individually, or in association, they should remember that they must be entirely submissive to episcopal authority. Do not let them be beguiled by an excessive ardour for charitable enterprise, which, if it induces any relaxation of due obedience, is itself false, unproductive of solid benefit, and displeasing to God. Those who please God are those who are ready to give up their own ideas and listen to the bidding of the rulers of the Churches absolutely, as to his own."<sup>1</sup>

Comment on these extracts seems almost needless. To such an extent do they give away the Church's case and justify the criticism of its opponents. "The right of having and holding is to be kept inviolate," or as Pope Leo put it elsewhere in the same Encyclical, "We assume as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable."<sup>2</sup> These are significant words, the right of having and holding is the mainspring of the competitive system. People must compete for something, and private property supplies the requisite object. Selfishness is to remain the motive power of the machine. This teaching is derived from St. Thomas Aquinas, who, in his turn, borrowed it from Aristotle. "St. Thomas," says Father Day, "favours individual proprietary right, justifying

<sup>1</sup> Day, *Catholic Democracy*, pp. 13-16.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 262.

it by the economic theory based on the natural law, as outlined by Aristotle (cf. *Politics*, II., Chap. II.). Private property, according to St. Thomas, is necessary to human life for three reasons: 'First, because every one is more careful to look after what belongs to himself alone than after what is common to all or to many.'"<sup>1</sup>

There is no need to prolong the quotation. Aristotle was a heathen who naturally made selfishness the moving force. A man will do more for himself than he will for anybody else; or, as we find Father Day putting it, individuals "conduct their business as they judge best. In so doing they ordinarily seek their own interest."<sup>2</sup>

Selfishness as the one possible and divinely instituted basis of Society may be excellent Paganism, but it is very bad Christianity. The dictum of St. Thomas Aquinas that "every one is more careful to look after what belongs to himself alone than what is common to all or to many," is by no means all the truth. He is an unfortunate man of business who has never had in his employ one who worked for him with equal or greater diligence than he would have worked for himself. Servants of limited liability companies have been known to toil with a whole-hearted devotion which could not have been exceeded had all the shares been in their own hands; and even state officials are not all Tite Barnacles in the circumlocution office, but have sometimes died before their time, worn out with their efforts in the public behoof. If there were persons of this kind existing in St. Thomas's day, he was very unobservant not to have seen them, and taken them into account, and so far, is neither infallible himself, nor a trustworthy guide to infallibility in others. If there were not such persons it shows the folly of trusting to an authority who lived in the Dark Ages and is already seven centuries out of date. The second great commandment bids us love our neighbour as ourselves; that is, we must, if we are so called upon; "look after what is common to all or to many," or even to a single person as carefully as we look after what belongs to ourselves. But Christianity goes beyond even this, and tell us that, on occasion, we must love our neighbours even better than ourselves, in fact, in the extreme case, love our neighbour everything and ourselves

<sup>1</sup> Day, *Catholic Democracy*, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 151.

nothing; we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren. True this is idealism, a striving after the highest, but Christianity either is a system of ideals, which can never be contented with human nature, as it is, but must always be urging it forward to perfection, or it is nothing. It further holds that this is not the folly it otherwise would be, because it has omnipotence behind it, and supernatural powers, able to change and uplift the most selfish and degraded of mankind. Whom, then, ought we to follow, Christ or Aristotle?<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider this question of private property a little further. Under the laws of England a man who makes a profit may not only have it and hold it, he may bequeath it to his descendants, and in so doing may subject it to a great number of restrictions. Thus, if he is a strong Protestant, he may lay it down that, if any of those who benefit under his will turn Roman Catholics, or even marry a Roman Catholic, they shall forfeit their share. The law of England also contains a system whereby the national forces which disperse property can be resisted, and property both in money and land be "tied up" to an almost unlimited extent. It thus favours accumulation and exaggerates natural distinctions between individuals; nay more, it altogether upsets them, so that, as it was once expressed, "some men have plenty of money and no brains, and others have plenty of brains and no money." Did Pope Leo XIII. swallow all these anomalies at a gulp, saying that they were from above and not from below, when he exhorted Christian Democracy that it should "maintain the diversity of ranks, which properly belongs to a well-ordered state; in fine, let it prefer for human society that form and character which its Divine Author has imposed upon it"?<sup>2</sup>

St. Thomas Aquinas was, however, careful to say something on the other side. "Man," he declared, "can never look on the fruits of his wealth as his exclusive property, but as the common property of all, and should therefore be ready to share them with others in their need."<sup>2</sup> A man's wealth is his own, the fruits of it are common property, to the extent, but only to the extent that he must share them with others in their need, of which, apparently, he is to be

<sup>1</sup> It is extraordinary the harm which Aristotle has done the Church. We shall come across him again later on.

<sup>2</sup> Day, *Catholic Democracy*, p. 265.

the sole judge. Thus the Roman Catholic doctrine is private property with all its inherent evils tempered by private charity,—the Red Cross theory of society over again.

While the poor are to have the hardships of their lot mitigated by the doles of the well-to-do, the Roman Catholic Church does not overlook the rich. Christian Democracy, so we have read, “repudiates another ground of offence, which arises from paying so much regard to the interests of the poorer and weaker classes as to seem to overlook the wealthier and more powerful, who are nevertheless of equal importance to the preservation and development of the State. The Christian law of Charity forbids this.” Pope Leo, writing from the largest and most magnificent palace in the world, evidently thought there was something in the complaint we referred to above, that nowadays too much is being done for the working-classes. It would never do to offend “the wealthier and more powerful.” The Dublin slum tenant may have the help of the charitable, but it would be unwise to offend the Dublin slum landlord, who may be both wealthy and powerful, and contribute handsomely to Peter’s Pence, the building of Churches, and other pious works. The Church of Rome has always known how to keep in with the rich and the strong and to do it all in the name of Christian Charity.

Christian Democracy also is “to have regard to the temporal advantage of the poorer and less educated, but it designs therewith to fit their minds for the enjoyment of things eternal.” The Pope emphasized this point in another passage. The object of Christian Democracy is “that the workmen at home and in public may be able freely to comply with their moral and religious duties . . . and that they may more easily and earnestly devote themselves to the attainment of the *one thing necessary*—the final good for which we came into the world.”<sup>1</sup> The Church has a measure of care for the inequalities and sorrows of this life, but its heart is in the things of another world. There would be nothing to complain of in this preference, did it not tend to the disregard of injustice upon earth. As it is, Pope Leo competes with the Roman Catholic priests in Dublin in his eagerness to show how much truth there is in the Social Democratic criticism of Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> Day, *Catholic Democracy*, p. 270.



Finally, according to the Pope, there must be no politics. It is difficult to understand how there can be *democracy* without politics, but the Pope was equal to the occasion. He had ready a definition of democracy all his own. "Although Democracy," he writes, "by its very name and by philosophical usage, denotes popular rule, yet in this application it must be employed altogether without its political significance, so as to denote nothing whatever besides beneficent Christian action upon the people." Action upon a passive people is called by the name properly belonging to action by the people itself. So used, the term democracy is an entire misnomer, and why the Pope should go out of his way to say that in his vocabulary active means passive, is not a little puzzling.<sup>1</sup>

The question arises, Can there be adequate action upon Society without politics? How stands the matter practically in this country? We depend on selfishness—the greed of gain, the right of having and holding—for the power to drive the social machine. But we have found by experience that this power, left to itself, leads to the most appalling evils.<sup>2</sup> It has been necessary to restrict and chain it by innumerable legal enactments. Our present system may be defined as "regulated individualism." Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, our acts are either immediately or mediately regulated by law. When we come down to breakfast in the morning the milk we drink must fulfil the law's demands; it must neither be deficient in fat, nor excessively watery; the tea and the sugar are protected from adulteration; the bread and the coals must be delivered by weight, and so we go on through the day. When we leave our homes for our business the law still dogs our footsteps. The requirements of the Workshops and Factory Acts, the details of our industrial legislation, are so numerous that they need an expert to know them all. We go on fettering the savage monster of self-seeking by a thousand restrictions lest it should bite and devour us. To make these restrictions effective an army of

<sup>1</sup> Father Day himself admits that the activity in the Church started by the Encyclical of 1891 ought properly to be called "The Catholic Social Movement." There cannot be any objection to this non-committal title.

<sup>2</sup> Where so much has been written I will only call attention to Arnold Toynbee's lecture on "Industry and Democracy" in *The Industrial Revolution*, pp. 178–202.

inspectors, trade board officials, medical officers, analysts, and what not, is necessary. The continual cry is that this army is not large enough, that reinforcements are urgently needed. This holding in, or attempted holding of anarchic selfishness by the will of the community is politics, the only practical means by which improvements can be made. The Church which bans politics condemns itself to helplessness. The only country in which the Roman Catholic Church has had any success in ameliorating social conditions has been in Germany, where "the Christian Democrats, in conjunction with the Centre in the Reichstag, were successful in securing legal effect for many of its measures."<sup>1</sup> But in the main the fate of the Roman Catholic Church in modern times has been social impotence. She has not lacked men of zeal and insight from De Lamennais to M. Sagnier, whose movement, the "Sillon," Pius X. so ruthlessly crushed. They all held that political action was necessary, and so the Church suppressed them. The reason is to be found in the words of the Encyclical:—"Finally we again enjoin, and with greater insistence, that whatever schemes people take up in the popular cause, whether individually or in association, they must be entirely submissive to episcopal authority." This sentence is the death-knell to the hopes of any Catholics who have at heart social reconstruction, or even social reform. The Bishops have their multifarious Church duties in this world, and their preoccupations with the things of the next world; how can they take the lead in one of the most arduous tasks Christianity has ever been called upon to face? Besides, they have now no initiative of their own; they move only according to the orders of the "General Staff" at Rome, and Rome has unequivocally declared for Society as it is, its inequalities and injustices notwithstanding.

Father Day, on the very first page of his book, calls attention to the "ominous breach between the existing organization of democracy in Europe and all positive Christianity," and asks, "Is this cleavage permanent and necessary, or temporary and accidental"? If the pagan doctrine of Aristotle, accepted by St. Thomas Aquinas and embodied in the two Encyclicals is Christianity's

<sup>1</sup> Day, *Catholic Democracy*, p. 280.

last word on the subject, then the breach is necessary and permanent. The outlook is not cheering. At the Reformation the Protestant Churches retained large masses of Catholic doctrine; they took over the Catholic theory of Society with the rest, and have never got beyond it. They and their Catholic brethren are blind to the significance of the fact that the workers still eat their bread leavened with a sense of injustice. All the Churches in this respect are dumb dogs who cannot bark; they are blind guides who either cannot or will not lead. They helplessly and hopelessly accept things as they are and call Heaven to witness that such is the will of God. They can do no marvellous works because of their unbelief. Professing to have the secret of changing men's hearts, they are hindrances in the way of that altered society which is the natural outcome of the inward reformation, and which is the visible kingdom of God upon earth. But Christianity has always had a marvellous power of revival, and the day is possibly not far distant when a new sense of the scope of the second great commandment will take possession of it, and when it shall speed forward not merely a new heaven, but "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PERSONAL STUMBLING-STONE.

So far we have been considering what may be termed a collective stumbling-block, that which is formed by the existing constitution of society. We turn now to individual or personal difficulties in the way of accepting religion, the states or frames of mind which go with or incline towards unbelief.

The most common of these frames of mind is that of the simply indifferent, who occasionally think about religion, but are not attracted by it. They are very difficult to deal with. In most cases they can only be left to the natural shocks of life, misfortune, sickness, the approach of death, the loss of loved ones. Sometimes indifference is dispersed by kindlier means, by unexpected success, by sudden deliverance from disaster, or by the dawn of affection. Thus love and fear do their work in the world around us.

Christianity by implication passes sentence of severest condemnation on indifference. It everywhere insists on the need of wholeheartedness in the pursuit of religion. The Beatitudes tell us we must "hunger and thirst after righteousness." The Sermon on the Mount says: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Did not Bunyan catch the spirit of this exhortation when he wrote of Mercy at the wicket-gate, "Now, Mercy began to be very impatient, for each minute was as long to her as an hour; wherefore she prevented Christiana from a fuller interceding for her, by knocking at the gate herself. And she knocked then so loud, that she made Christiana to start"? Can anything be more reasonable than this demand which Christianity makes? If a man would be wealthy, does he not give himself to the pursuit of wealth? If he would be learned, does he not consecrate his life to learning? And if he would be religious, must he not make religion his supreme object?

A second class of persons is that of the preoccupied, those whose minds are so full of secular pursuits that they have no leisure



for anything besides, and who never think about religion at all. Some of these absorptions are refined and elevated, and attempts have been made to invest them with a religious character. Thus Professor Seeley was of opinion that "any habitual and regulated admiration is worthy to be called a religion,"<sup>1</sup> and argued in consequence that music, and science, and what is called civilization, as being things admired and believed in, form the more genuine religions of our time. Mr. Havelock Ellis goes so far as to say:—"Even the momentary expansion of the soul in laughter is, to however slight an extent, a religious exercise."<sup>2</sup> But to talk in this way is surely an abuse of language, and so a debasing of the moral currency. Margarine may be an excellent substitute for butter, but it is not butter, and the law of the land takes a severe view of those who do not observe the distinction. Music, science, civilization may be substitutes for religion in the case of their devotees, but they are not religion. This we have defined as having to do with the relations between God and the soul. There must be this higher, this divine element, or the word religion loses its special content.

The stumbling-stone of a place like the University of Cambridge, may be termed intellectualism. Constant study, living perpetually in a world of books, or specimens, or scientific experiments, tend to produce an abnormal condition. The thinking faculties are developed, but the emotions are starved, and people are blinded to the part which the emotions play in every department of human activity. If the type of the dried-up don prevailed universally, the world would come to a standstill. There would be so many reasons for and against every possible course, that nothing would stand out as the right thing to do, and consequently nothing would be done. The impulse which leads to action would be wanting. It is not as students, or philosophers, or scientists that we get to religion, but as men and women; and if the emotions are left out of men and women, they collapse, not only for purposes of religion, but for all other purposes as well.

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Religion*, pp. 91, 122.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Spirit*, p. 232 (quoted by William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 49, and again p. 77).

A Cambridge scientist has given us a pathetic picture of the effects of intellectualism. "It is certain that there are agnostics who would greatly prefer being theists, and theists who would give all they possess to be Christians, if they could thus secure promotion by purchase—*i.e.* by one single act of will. But yet the desire is not strong enough to sustain the will in perpetual action, so as to make the continual sacrifices which Christianity entails. Perhaps the hardest of these sacrifices to an intelligent man is that of his own intellect. At least I am certain that this is so in my own case. I have been so long accustomed to constitute my reason my sole judge of truth, that even while reason itself tells me it is not unreasonable to expect that the heart and the will should be required to join with reason in seeking God (for religion is for the *whole* man), I am too jealous of my reason to exercise my will in the direction of my most heart-felt desires."<sup>1</sup>

A fourth group is of those who are definitely hostile to religion. Many take up this attitude of enmity through misconception. They think Christianity to be other than it really is. They judge of it from the examples they see around them, from the conduct and still more from the creeds of organized bodies of Christians. Alas for the number of these stumbling-stones! A great burden is laid on the outsider when he is bidden to get behind all Churches and all the members of them, and examine for himself the essential beliefs of Christianity. Yet those who are in earnest will strive so to do, for no Church and no single individual embodies the Christian ideal. For that we must always be recurring to Christ Himself.

Some are at enmity to religion through their own wrong-doing. They have fallen into sin, and therefore any thought of God, of a future life, or of a judgment to come, is intolerable to them. These things must be banished from their minds somehow. In this connexion one may note a want of charitable judgment among Christians. They generally account for the sin by the unbelief. No doubt this is a true conclusion in some cases. Men lose the moral control which religion brings with it, and drift into wrong-doing. But in my way through life I have met with more men who have fallen into unbelief through sin, than with men who have fallen

<sup>1</sup> Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 132.

into sin through unbelief. The noble and self-sacrificing lives of many who have lost faith is one of the most striking phenomena of our times.

But perhaps the largest class of all is the great army of the do-as-you-likes. The natural instinct of every man is to please himself. The struggle for existence has implanted this in him, if it has done nothing else. The desire for social distinction, money-making, dress, amusement, fills the souls of multitudes. A still, small voice whispers that there are better things than these; but to attain them means self-renunciation, pleasing not one's self. Wonderfully subtle and ingenious are the arguments which people use to justify their doing as they like. Modern literature teems with them. Selfishness and even vice are adorned with all possible beauty, and virtue is made unlovely and often repulsive. The temptation to enlist in this mighty host is ever with us. We all need constantly to examine ourselves, and to see that we are keeping true allegiance to what is best.

To put the matter positively, the frame of mind which leads to religion is primarily emotional. We must be in love with goodness. We must put the kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness first, and everything else second. Many good arguments may be advanced as to why we should thus judge, but their conclusiveness may always be called in question. The verdict must ultimately be instinctive and intuitive, the natural leaping up and response of the heart when it beholds the best. "We needs must love the highest when we see it." The deeper hold this frame of mind has upon us the farther we can get; if we have it not, we shall make no progress. This is not to take up a narrow-minded or unreasoning attitude. Sensuous things are sensuously perceived, intellectual things are intellectually perceived, spiritual things are spiritually perceived. The appeal is to the soul within. Given the response, with earnestness in the quest, the goal will be reached.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE STUMBLING-STONE OF AUTHORITY.

IF we examine the type of religion which underlies and is assumed in what has already been written, we see that it is individualistic. Take the last chapter as an illustration. The first text quoted in it is, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Hunger and thirst are individual feelings. The promise "for they shall be filled" foreshadows an individual satisfaction. The second text quoted is "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Here are the two elements in religion so far as we have defined it—God, and the individual soul who seeks Him.

This conception is sharply opposed to another—the collective,<sup>1</sup> or authoritative. Here man, tainted by original sin, is regarded as incapable of seeking and finding God for himself. But this is no irremediable disaster. Religion is at hand ready-made, speaking with the voice of authority through a visible organization—the Church. Man has but to cease his vain efforts, to accept what the Church teaches, and all will be well with him. So different does a thing look according as we approach it from below or from above.

The strength of the second conception lies in the fact that its roots go down deep into the nature of things, far deeper than the individualistic school of thinkers, as a rule, perceives. Our lives obviously cannot make a successful beginning without the aid of authority. There is a reason for this. Children have no experience of their own to go upon, and must therefore take pieces of ready-made experience from other people or suffer disaster. If a child

<sup>1</sup> Collective religion is a thing which one does not hear much about nowadays. It will be found discussed and defended under the name of "multitudinism" in *Essays and Reviews*. See the article on "The National Church."

in its ignorance is about to catch hold of a knife by the blade instead of the handle, experience in the person of the nearest bystander rushes to the rescue and saves the child from cutting itself. So it is in things mental, moral and religious, as well as in things physical. Children must be under tutors and governors, or it will fare ill with them. At first they must take everything on trust, and those parents are cruel indeed, who for the sake of experiment, or through timidity, refuse to put any portion of their own experience at the service of their children.

This is where the conventions of society come in and have their place. As was pointed out in the very first sentence of *The Manuscripts of God*, as soon as we learn that there are such things as facts, we learn also that there are certain customary ways of regarding them. These ways we have to use to begin with, because we know no others. If we rebel we immediately encounter forces stronger than ourselves with unpleasant consequences. For instance our early experience may suggest to us that play is more pleasant than work. When we go to school we find ourselves in surroundings where work is, to all appearances, regarded as more pleasant than play. We must submit, or there will be a conflict of forces with painful results to ourselves. It is our puny experience against the practice founded on the experience of countless generations of mankind, and our experience naturally gets the worst of it.

But children grow up; every day they have a larger experience, and on the strength of it they begin to think for themselves. It is well that they should do so, for what are a child's judgments worth about beauty, truth and goodness? Not but what our little people have ever and again extraordinary intuitions, flashes of insight which sometimes take our breath away; it is their judgments which are in question. In regard to goodness they may be worth something in so far as they decide who is good to *him* or *her*, individually and who is not, but beyond that nothing. Every child divides all mankind into two classes, good and bad, like Cain and Abel. "Is Mr. Brown," it asks, "a good man or a bad man?" True it is that certain of their seniors have done their best to keep the children in countenance. There are the older Protestant theologians with their doctrine of total depravity—all the Mr.



Smiths are bad men; and there is Rousseau and his school, with their teaching that our faults are not our own, but Society's—all the Mr. Smiths are good men. But this by the way.

In matters of taste children are even more elementary. "Look at these pretty flowers?" "Why are flowers pretty?" "I don't know; these are roses and they are pretty." "Are people pretty?" "Yes, some people." "Are you pretty?" "You had better ask Father," and so on. As for truth, do not children believe every word that is said to them, however absurd? How can they do otherwise?<sup>1</sup> So we re-echo the words of St. Paul:—"When I was a child I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things."

Not only are a child's judgments intrinsically worthless, but they never improve in quality so long as they are judgments at second-hand, entirely derived from other people. The choice lies between independent action of the mind, and atrophy, mental and moral. But this putting away childish things, this venturing on the wide ocean of independent thought is just what causes all the difficulties. In the putting-away process there is risk that some things may be got rid of which are anything but childish—the long-tested experiences of others which are possessions of the highest value. The consequences of such jettisoning are so serious that there is now, and always has been, a widespread opinion in favour of never growing-up. According to this view the dangers of thinking wrongly are so great that it is best to avoid them by never thinking for ourselves at all. The modern feeling is against this view, and thus it encounters the stumbling-stone of authority.

Let us begin by trying to understand what authority really is—that is to say, the domestic, home-grown variety, which meets us every day of our lives. Following our usual course we will take a concrete example of a familiar kind. I believe, contrary to the evidences of my senses, that the earth goes round the sun. As a non-scientific person I cannot offer any demonstration of that fact.

<sup>1</sup> If anyone wants to see the difference between a child's judgment (and probably his own judgment too) and a philosopher's on the simple proposition that two and two make four, let him consult Mr. Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 119-128, and 130-131. It will give most of us a fresh idea of what being intellectually grown-up really means.

In all probability I could not understand the demonstration if it were placed before me. I have to accept the fact on the authority of the astronomers and mathematicians. All non-scientific people have to do the same, or remain deceived.

It is true that I can remove some of the difficulties in the way of believing what contradicts the evidence of my senses. For instance I remember that as a boy, whenever I rode in any form of conveyance, it was my delight to look at the ground and see it apparently whirling itself away under the wheels. I thus grasped the fact that apparent motion may not be real motion. Next I can understand that if I and everything about me move together, it will not be possible for me to detect the motion, because there will be no fixed object by which I can do so. Thus it becomes credible to me that the apparent motion of the sun may not be a real motion, and that the apparent stability of the earth may mask a real movement. But the astronomical and mathematical demonstration of the fact is beyond me, and I have to take it on trust, or, in other words, on authority. Be it observed however that I do not believe because the Astronomer-Royal, or a Senior Wrangler of my acquaintance affirms that the thing is so, but because the fact has been found to be so by the people who have gone into the subject. Though I am compelled to take the facts at second-hand, I ultimately believe because of the facts, not because of the people who state the facts.

When I thus take my facts at second-hand I am manifestly intellectually inferior to the man who has them at first-hand, and I ought to order myself lowly and reverently towards him as my superior. At the same time I ought to cherish the desire to know as many facts as possible at first-hand for myself, for thus and thus only do I become intellectually grown-up. It is the facts at first-hand which matter.

We need not after all go as far away as the stars for an illustration. If we refused to submit to authority in any shape or form, we should never take the advice of friend or expert. If I am in a legal difficulty I go to my solicitor and consult him. If he in his turn is in a difficulty he takes counsel's opinion. If I am in a physical difficulty, I go to a doctor. If he cannot diagnose my case, he advises me to consult a specialist. So whenever we are ignorant

and helpless we go to those who are wiser than we are, and abide by their superior judgment. They have the facts which we have not.

In our previous book we tried to show that faith is universal, and that daily life is built on a foundation of faith. Authority is another aspect of the same truth, and is as widespread as faith itself. But I repeat, it is the facts, not the persons, which are the ultimate basis both of faith and of authority. The solicitor takes counsel's opinion that he may get at a particular fact, viz.: what the law really is. The physician calls in the specialist for the same reason,—to reach a true reading of the symptoms, to find out what the disease really is. We go to one man rather than another just in proportion as we believe that he more than anybody else is in touch with the facts. This is why we have faith in him, and also why we submit to his authority.

If there is any analogy between ordinary life and the religious life, authority will have its place in the latter. A Cambridge Society called "The Heretics," enforces as one of its conditions of membership, "the rejection of all appeal to authority in the discussion of religious questions." So far as this rule implies that a statement is not to be received merely because it is official, or because it is made by a certain person, it is a good rule, but if it means that there must be no appeal to facts which may not be known to anyone present at a meeting of the Society, but are known to certain other people, then it disallows what is constantly being done in daily life.

As for more specifically moral questions, or questions of conduct, we are each but a single unit, and countless generations have gone before us. Thus it is easy to see how the individual experience is dwarfed by the collective experience; there is, in fact, a constant risk that it should be crushed by it altogether. Those conventions of society, those seemingly arbitrary rules of conduct, what are they but the crystallized experiences of all the ages, tested by innumerable trials, and on that account not lightly to be set aside? To children, their fathers and mothers are the embodiment of the collective experience, and some of us can remember how terribly depressed and helpless we used to feel in the face of their superior age and knowledge. As children grow older they occasionally pit

their own untried ideas against the general wisdom; there is a new and special factor in their particular case, they say, and all previous experience must be modified in the light of it. Sometimes it really is so, and then the world makes progress, but the young people should remember how great the odds are against them, and not be too impatient when the old folks shake their heads.

We are now in a position to define authority as contrasted with liberty. The two are placed side by side in Milton's familiar line:

"He for God only, she for God in him."

Liberty is voluntary first-hand obedience working through knowledge; authority means compulsory second-hand obedience working through ignorance. This being so, we should all strive to qualify ourselves for liberty, however hard the task may be. But, as we saw a little way back, the reply comes: "Not so; the risks are too great. Liberty of thought is a stormy sea. Many there be who set sail upon it; few who come safe to the other side. Better listen to the voice of authority which can, without possibility of mistake, decide for you what you are unable and unfitted to decide for yourselves."



## CHAPTER VII.

### INFALLIBILITY.

AT the end of the last chapter we encountered authority in its most tremendous and overwhelming form—that of Infallibility, which now falls to be examined. The task may prove both long and tedious, but if we have patience we may not only come across different views which have been held on the subject of Authority in religion, but may gain further insight into the nature of religion itself. The admission must be made at the outset that the question of thinking and deciding for oneself in matters of morals and religion, is one of great difficulty. Even Protestant writers have drawn attention to certain good results of the acceptance of absolute authority. Here is a remarkable expression of opinion:—"I am convinced that the intellectual dependence and confidence which the Roman Catholic Church gives to nine-tenths of her children, however much it may paralyse the genius and the intellectual activity of the few, offers to the meditative piety and spiritual affections of the many just that guarantee of serenity, without which these affections seldom or never attain their highest proportions. I doubt if there be in any Church in the world, in proportion to the number of its adherents, so much true devotion and piety, so much genuine religious ardour and self-sacrifice, and, more than all, that best of all tests of the substantial truth of religion, so much true blessedness in the devotional life, as there is inside the Roman Catholic Church."<sup>1</sup>

Roman Catholic writers, by the way, draw a less flattering picture of the state of affairs inside their infallible Church. Father Benson says: "Amongst Catholics emotionalism and even strong sentiment is considerably discouraged; the heart of religion is thought rather to reside in the adherence and obedience of the will." He adds: "These cold, undevout souls—or rather

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, *Essays*, p. ix.

souls of a naturally undeveloped temperament—adhere to their religion through the sheer motive of obedience, and it is surely remarkable to condemn them on that account. Obedience to the will of God is actually more meritorious, not less, when it is unaccompanied by emotional consolations and sensible fervour.”<sup>1</sup>

Newman has a passage bearing on this point which I for one can never read without astonishment. It occurs in his *Idea of a University*, Discourse viii, §3. He begins by speaking of “man’s fearful subjection to sense which is his ordinary state,” and continues:—“Here even divine grace, to speak of things according to their appearances, is ordinarily baffled and retires, without expedient or resource, before this giant fascination. Religion seems too high and unearthly to be able to exert continued influence on us: its effort to rouse the soul, and the soul’s effort to co-operate, are too violent to last. It is like holding out the arm at full length, or supporting some great weight, which we manage to do for a time, but soon are exhausted and succumb. Nothing can act beyond its own nature; when then we are called to what is supernatural, though those extraordinary aids from Heaven are given us, with which obedience becomes possible, yet even with them it is of transcendent difficulty. We are drawn down to earth every moment with the ease and certainty of a natural gravitation, and it is only by sudden impulses, and, as it were, forcible plunges that we attempt to mount upwards. Religion indeed enlightens, terrifies, subdues; it gives faith, it inflicts remorse, it inspires resolutions, it draws tears, it inflames devotion, but only for the occasion.”

The moral which Newman draws is that the deficiencies of religion need to be supplemented by “a remedy which we can make our own, the object of some legitimate faculty, or the aim of some natural affection, which is capable of resting on the mind, and taking up its familiar lodging with it, and engrossing it, and which thus becomes a match for the besetting powers of sensuality.” This “remedy which we can make our own is intellectual cultivation,”—a conclusion which proves that though Newman began as an Anglican, and ended as a Roman Catholic, he remained all the while an Oxford don.

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions of a Convert*, pp. 150–151.

Father Benson, in the passage quoted above, is defending Roman Catholics from the charge of formalism. I do not think this is the right accusation. Bunyan hangs Formalist alongside Hypocrisy. Formalism implies insincerity. It means that the outside is all there is, that inside there is nothing. The extracts given above suggest not formalism, but what theologians call legalism. Religion is regarded as a law, every command of which must be scrupulously obeyed. St. Paul, when he was a Jew, would have perfectly understood and entirely sympathized with both Newman and Benson. The motto which he chose for legalism is "Cursed is every one which continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." The law speaks with authority and demands unfailing obedience in all things. This obedience is beyond human power to give, so the law becomes the galling yoke, the heavy burden; but Christ says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." He begins with personal affection, "come unto Me,"—love first, then obedience. It is love which is the "legitimate faculty," the "natural affection capable of resting on the mind and taking up its familiar lodging with it and engrossing it, thus becoming a match for the besetting powers of sensuality." For "love is the fulfilling of the law," the law is swallowed up by it and disappears. Roman Catholicism, by putting the emphasis in religion on authority, and its correlative obedience, is necessarily affected by the spirit of legalism.

Still, to go back to the point where we digressed, it must be admitted that the freedom from intellectual perplexities which most Roman Catholics enjoy is a great help to the devout life. The question is whether it is worth its price. For it must be remembered that the coming to any definite conclusion gives peace of mind. John Henry Newman went over to the Church of Rome, and described his feelings as those of one who enters a harbour after a storm. His brother Francis William Newman broke with Christianity altogether and embraced Theism. He spoke of his soul as a storm-tossed bird which had at last found shelter. The peace that comes after we have ceased to be of doubtful mind, ceased tossing about on the open sea, does not absolve us from the necessity of examining what haven it is we have entered, or are invited to enter.

Of all the faith there is on earth, Mohammedan faith is perhaps the most profound and the most unquestioning. Ought we for this reason to embrace Islam?

There is another side to the attractive picture Mr. Hutton draws. Authority paralyses the intellectual activity, not only of the few, but of all who are subjected to it, and mental atrophy coinciding with the range of authority is the result. In the moral sphere the consequences are no less serious. It is a commonplace of contemporary observation, for instance, that the Irish Roman Catholics are nowhere seen to such advantage as in their own country. When the props and supports on which they lean at home are withdrawn from them, and they find themselves in less favourable surroundings, they markedly deteriorate. This form of weakness is found in human nature everywhere, but its intensity varies with the number of props and supports. The more there are to be withdrawn, the greater the helplessness without them. "Be entirely submissive to episcopal authority" is a characteristic Roman Catholic exhortation; "Dare to stand alone" sounds the true Protestant note.

To the harmful effects of authority inside the Church must be added its effect on those outside the pale. There is one "ominous breach" between organized Christianity and the working-classes, there is another breach, equally ominous, between it and modern intellectual activity. For authority does not present itself to the thinking world of to-day in the homely guise in which it was described above. There is another form of it, which Mr. Balfour defines as the "non-rational action of mind on mind." If that is a true account of it, no wonder many are in rebellion against it. Those who wish for an example of the practical working of this principle will find one in Mrs. Annie Besant's experience.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Besant, being swept by the "storm of doubt," went to see Dr. Pusey. "In vain," she writes, "did he urge the duty of blind submission to the authority of the Church, of blind, unreasoning faith that questioned not. . . . 'It is not your duty to ascertain the truth,' he told me sternly. 'It is your duty to accept and believe the truth as laid down by the Church. At your peril you reject it. The responsibility is not

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 109.



yours so long as you dutifully accept that which the Church has laid down for your acceptance.” So speaks authority when it assumes the form of infallibility. .

The greater part of the Christian Church speaks on this wise,—the Roman Catholic Church with the utmost insistence and emphasis, the Orthodox Churches of the East in milder tones, and a section of the Anglican Church as a feeble echo of the larger bodies.

It is with the Roman Catholic Church and its anathema of “the right of private judgment” that we have principally to deal. As we have often said before, the whole question is of our right to grow up, to cease to be children, and the Roman Catholic Church has now become the most formidable and effective instrument the world has ever seen for preventing people from growing-up and for keeping them in a state of moral and religious childhood.

I listened once to a sermon in Mainz Cathedral. It was in German, and I did not understand the whole of it, but I understood the words *liebe Kinder*, “dear children,” which came very often and were addressed to a congregation composed entirely of adults. The preacher quite clearly regarded the men and women before him as children, and the men and women also quite clearly regarded themselves as such. I never heard a Protestant minister use the phrase save in a Sunday School. I wondered what priest and people would have thought had St. Paul suddenly burst in upon them, and had finished his discourse with the words, “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.”

Infallibility thus exercised is a mighty force. Great multitudes have reposed in it from infancy. Others born outside it fall into its arms through despair of finding the truth. Let us in the rest of the chapter consider it very briefly in the light of history.

If the traditional “man in the street” had been asked, say in the year 1500 A.D., on what authority he based his religious belief, he would have unhesitatingly answered, “The Church.” The Roman Catholic Church was then supreme throughout Western Christendom. It alone interpreted scripture, preserved tradition, and announced with infallible voice the dogmas necessary to salvation. At its head was the Pope, the direct descendant of the Apostles, Vicar of Christ, the visible representative of God on earth.

Ordinary mortals took their creed without a doubt from an authority so ancient, so powerful, so ubiquitous.

Acute observers even at that date descried signs of a coming change. As everybody knows, a few years later there began a revolt, called the Reformation, which cleft the Roman Catholic Church in twain, and altered the views of a large portion of mankind as to the basis of authority in matters of religion. The New Testament in the original Greek came to light. Men read it, and as they read it they said, "The Roman Catholic Church is not the Church herein depicted." Its practices, nay even its theology are unscriptural. This altered intellectual attitude is profoundly interesting. The Reformers used their reason, or, in other words, they went on critical and rationalistic lines in their comparison of the Church of their day with the Church of the New Testament; but they retained the attitude of faith, the non-critical attitude towards the Bible. They needed an infallible authority wherewith to overthrow a rival infallibility. Scripture lay ready to hand as a criterion of the Church's claims. The Reformers took the authority of the Bible for granted and never applied to it those principles of criticism which they applied to the Church. As Dr. Beard writes:<sup>1</sup> "There is no kind of hesitation in Luther's assertion of the authority of scripture. . . . But looking at the matter with nineteenth century eyes, it is very curious to remark how absolutely unconscious the Reformers seem to be of the necessity of supporting this affirmation by any kind of proof, or even of defining the exact sense in which they make it. This is, no doubt, in part due to the fact that none of their opponents questioned it; it was a universal postulate of controversy."

It was not to be supposed that inquiry would stop at this point. The human mind, having asked questions about the infallible Church, very naturally went on to ask questions about the infallible Book. The first important step beyond the Reformers' position was taken in England. In 1624 Lord Herbert of Cherbery, elder brother of the saintly George Herbert, repelled alike by the Roman Catholic Church, which denied salvation to all outside its own pale, and by Calvinism, which denied salvation to all

<sup>1</sup> *The Reformation*, pp. 120-1.

outside the number of the elect, published his treatise *De Veritate*. In this he laid down the lines of a universal religion deduced mainly from the inner light, which, as he contended, the Deity had made to shine within the breast of every man. Lord Herbert is looked upon as a father of the English Deists, a school of writers who began with Toland, the author of *Christianity not Mysteriorious* (1696), continued through Shaftesbury, Collins, Woolston, Chubb and Tindal, and culminated in Bolingbroke and Hume. Bishop Butler replied especially to Tindal and his book *Christianity as old as the Creation*. He is held to have crushed the Deists in his celebrated *Analogy*, the most successful work of Christian apologetic ever published. English Deism was swept away by the great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, brought about by the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield. It may be noted that, just before the rise of the Deists, Newton published his *Principia* (1687). The magnificent sweep of its generalizations, and the unbounded operation of the law of gravitation, then first established on a scientific basis, profoundly influenced the thought of the succeeding generation, and brought with it the conception of the universality and unbroken continuity of natural law, which has ever since so largely dominated the human mind.

The Deistic movement, though a failure in England, won mighty triumphs in Europe. Voltaire spent three years in this country (1726-1729), where he became acquainted with the writings of the Deists and the philosophy of Locke. Bolingbroke specially influenced him, and the new thought, first transplanted to France and then to Russia (where Voltaire visited Frederick the Great) produced prodigious results. In France the Church was still unreformed, its offence was rank and smelt to Heaven, and Voltaire fell upon it with extraordinary pertinacity, with supreme literary skill, and the greatest power of ridicule and sarcasm the world has ever seen. He turned the French into a nation of free-thinkers, and no one has yet arisen to undo his work.

France in its turn re-acted on England. Thomas Paine sat at the feet of Voltaire, and in 1794 published his *Age of Reason*, which was the text-book of working-class infidelity in this country down to mid-Victorian days. The Higher Criticism has at least

one achievement to its credit. It has effectually demolished the Voltairean criticism; the idea of evolution in religion has rendered it absurd.

The 19th century witnessed the full coming of the Higher Criticism. F. C. Baur, who lived from 1792 to 1860 is its father. He endeavoured to read the New Testament with his eyes open, and to understand it by the light of the circumstances under which it originated. His extreme conclusions have not justified themselves to more cautious scholars, but his mark on their work is indelible. The Higher Criticism has changed men's views about the infallibility of scripture as much as the Reformation changed their views about the Church.

The history of the last four hundred years thus shows us three claimants to infallibility. The Church, the Bible and the Human Soul with its own inward light. Each of these must in turn engage our attention.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ROME AND INFALLIBILITY.

WE begin, then, with the Roman Catholic Church as the supreme embodiment of the principle of external authority in religion and morals. Cardinal Newman in describing its claims does not attempt to minimize their far-reaching character. "This power [of infallibility]," he writes, "viewed in its fulness is as tremendous as the giant evil which has called for it. It claims, when brought into exercise but in the legitimate manner, for otherwise of course it is but quiescent, to know for certain the very meaning of every portion of that Divine Message in detail, which was committed by our Lord to His Apostles. It claims to know its own limits, and to decide what it can determine absolutely and what it cannot. It claims, moreover, to have a hold upon statements not directly religious, so far as this—to determine whether they indirectly relate to religion, and, according to its own definitive judgment, to pronounce whether or not, in a particular case, they are simply consistent with revealed truth. It claims to decide magisterially, whether as within its own province or not, that such and such statements are or are not prejudicial to the *Depositum* of faith, in their spirit or in their consequences, and to allow them, or condemn and forbid them accordingly. It claims to impose silence at will on any matters, or controversies, of doctrine which on its own *ipse dixit*, it pronounces to be dangerous, or inexpedient or inopportune. It claims that, whatever may be the judgment of Catholics upon such acts, these acts should be received by them with those outward marks of reverence, submission and loyalty, which Englishmen, for instance, pay to the presence of their sovereign, without expressing any criticism on them on the ground that in their matter they are inexpedient, or in their manner violent or harsh; and lastly, it claims to have the right of inflicting spiritual punishment, of cutting off from the ordinary channels of the divine life, and of simply excommunicating those who refuse



to submit themselves to its formal declarations. Such is the infallibility lodged in the Catholic Church, viewed in the concrete, as clothed and surrounded by the appendages of its high sovereignty, it is, to repeat what I said above, a super-eminent prodigious power sent upon earth to encounter and master a giant evil."<sup>1</sup>

Anyone who will carefully study this statement will see what a far-reaching system of absolution is here set up. The Apostle Paul exhorts us that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God." From this point of view everything becomes to us a matter of faith or morals, and in both these departments the Roman Catholic Church claims an unqualified supremacy. The power of the Church is thus co-extensive with human life, and is backed with the full force of the confessional, the systematic neglect of which is mortal sin. Behind the confessional stands the penalty of excommunication, and if a person dies excommunicate and unrepentant, the terrors of everlasting punishment await him in the world to come. The Roman Catholic Church is thus, in theory at least, the most tremendous despotism that it can enter into the heart of man to conceive.

It was inevitable that this system and the human spirit, the unregenerate human spirit if you please, should sooner or later come into collision. The quarrel began long ago with the Renaissance and the Reformation. The final declaration of hostility, the apparently irremediable breach, has taken place within the lifetime of the older generation. It is to be found in what are popularly known as the Encyclical and the Syllabus—the Encyclical *Quanta cura* and the Syllabus of Errors issued at Rome on December 8th, 1864, by Pope Pius IX.<sup>2</sup>

As the present attitude of the Papacy towards modern civilization cannot be understood apart from history, the following brief summary of events may be found useful.

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> The full title of the latter document is *A Syllabus of the principal errors of our times as set forth by the Pope in Consistorial Allocutions, Encyclicals, and other Letters Apostolic*. The authorised translation of it, together with the affirmative counter-propositions by the Jesuit writer Schrader is given in Arthur, *The Pope, the Kings, and the People*, pp. 703-732; and also in *The Syllabus for the People*, by a Monk of St. Augustine's. See also the last chapter in Draper, *Conflict between Science and Religion*.

- 1846. Pius IXth elected Pope and begins reforming the government of the Papal States.
- 1848. The year of revolutions. Pius IXth compelled to flee from Rome to Gaeta. He appeals to the Catholic Powers to restore him by force of arms.
- 1849. A French army besieges and takes Rome.
- 1850. The Pope returns and silently restores the old regime in the Papal States.
- 1861. Victor Emmanuel proclaimed King of Italy. The Papal States pass to him with the exception of Rome and its immediate neighbourhood. The Temporal Power of the Pope was secured by the French troops in Rome.
- 1870. French troops withdrawn in consequence of the Franco-German War. Italian Government completes the annexation of the Papal dominions with the exception of the Vatican, St. John's Lateran, and the Villa Gondolpho.

The date of the Syllabus was shortly after the signing of an agreement by which Napoleon III. bound himself to withdraw his troops from Rome by the end of 1866, thus endangering the Pope's Temporal Power. Pius IXth may well be excused for nervousness at this time. He was conscious of the good intentions with which he had begun his reign. These had availed him nothing. His Prime Minister, Rossi, had been assassinated, and he himself forced to flee from Rome, the citadel of Western Christendom. All around him there had seemed to be "red ruin and the breaking up of laws." No wonder the world seemed an evil place, and modern civilization a device of the Evil One.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman Catholic point of view, as shown in the Syllabus, is not to be judged by itself alone. It is part of a policy which culminated in the Vatican Council of 1870, and the decreeing of the Pope's personal infallibility. Strange as such proceedings may seem, they must be regarded as an attempt on the part of the Church

<sup>1</sup> The above-mentioned date of the issue of the Syllabus, Dec. 8th, was also the tenth anniversary of the promulgation by Pius IXth of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary—an act done by the Pope on his own authority without the calling of a General Council, a kind of ecclesiastical *coup d'état*. The choice of the day may have been meant to remind the world that the Pope, though not so strong as he could wish in things temporal, was still mighty in things theological.

to fit itself more thoroughly for the needs of the times, to restore the walls of the New Jerusalem, to build afresh the *Civitas Dei*, the kingdom of God upon the earth.<sup>1</sup>

The Church had always had its differences from and contentions with thought outside itself. As it defined its own position more clearly, it condemned more precisely those who did not agree with it. The Syllabus is, as has been said, the final and formal declaration of permanent hostility to various principles and forms of thought against which the Roman Church had been striving for centuries. It makes strange reading for the modern student. Its language is vague, and its references are hard to determine, but there can be little doubt about its general spirit and intention. Eighty errors in all are enumerated, the condemnation of each being in a negative form. The last article is perhaps the most significant of all. The error is that "the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself to and agree with, progress, liberalism and modern civilization." Schrader gives as the positive proposition, "The Roman Pontiff cannot be reconciled to modern civilization and progress, or compromise with them." His comment is, "For those who defend the righteousness and rights of our holy religion do rightfully demand that the unchangeable and immovable principles of eternal righteousness shall be observed entire and unimpaired, and that the power of our salutary and divine religion shall be upheld. The faithful shall be led in the sure way of salvation and not of the downward road to destruction. The Holy See is the highest support, protector and pastor of the faithful. Therefore it cannot connect itself with liberalism, and with modern civilization,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone, it will be remembered, joined in the fray after the Vatican Council had been held. He published in 1874 a pamphlet entitled *The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation*, wherein he defended the following thesis: "Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change of faith, when she has refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused; when no one can become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another, and when she has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history" (p. 6). Mr. Gladstone was convicted by his critics of error on one point. He was wrong in maintaining that the Syllabus and the Vatican Council marked a new departure. They were the logical outcome of what has been going on for centuries, and, in a sense, from the very earliest period of Church history.

without the most serious violation of conscience, and without the greatest universal scandal."

Of course the significance of these propositions turns on the meaning given to the very wide terms, "progress," "liberalism," "modern civilization." A defender of the Syllabus writes thus:—"The last condemnation censures the insulting assertion that the Roman Pontiff either stands in need of reconciling himself with true civilization, or that he ought to join hands with Red Republicanism, covertly implied in the term "liberalism."<sup>1</sup> But there are other forms of Liberalism besides Red Republicanism. Are these then uncondemned? Neither does the Augustinian monk say what the true civilization is. It is not modern civilization. Is it then medieval civilization? Let us look at the Syllabus a little more closely and see if we can determine this point.

Error 13 runs:—"The method and principles by which the old scholastic doctors cultivated theology are no longer suitable to the demands of our times and to the progress of the sciences," Schrader gives the corresponding affirmative thus:—"The method and principles according to which the old scholastic doctors pursued the study of theology completely correspond with the wants of our time and with the progress of science." The same writer in his commentary on this article expands this last clause, and affirms that scholasticism "perfectly corresponds with the wants of all time."

What is this scholastic system? For centuries it has been abandoned by all independent thinkers; its records moulder on the shelves of our ancient libraries, but it is still revered by the Roman Catholic Church as the sum and substance of all knowledge. It is to be found in its perfection in the works of St. Thomas Aquinas whose life just covered the middle half of the 13th century—1225-1275 A.D.—a long while ago, it will be noted. The chief of these works is that known as the *Summa Theologica*, which though professedly concerned only with Theology, is in fact a complete summary or compendium of the knowledge of the times. All knowledge is from God. Theology therefore comprehended both philosophy and science. St. Thomas naturally begins at the

<sup>1</sup> *The Syllabus for the People*, by a Monk of St. Augustine's (p. 47).



top. He first treats of the divine nature; next the creation, then the angels, then the work of the six days, and so on.

The *Summa* cannot be recommended for popular reading, though its author in his Prologue professes to write for beginners. The higher teaching in medieval times was necessarily oral as manuscripts were rare and there were no printed books. It generally took the form of discussion, each point being thrown into a *quaestio* and discussed *pro* and *con*.<sup>1</sup> The *Summa* is a summary of these discussions in written form. I open it at random, and come on Quaestio XLVIII. It is, "Whether evil is a nature?" Five objections are then given. This is the first objection. "It seems that evil is a nature. For every genus is a nature. But evil is a genus; for the Philosopher says (*De Praedicamentis*) that *good and evil are not in a genus*, but are *genera of other things*. Therefore evil is a nature." The Philosopher is Aristotle, who in the *Summa* contends for importance with the Bible itself. He is quoted in the Latin translation from the Arabic, the knowledge of Greek having at that time disappeared from the Western world. After the objections comes a contrary, which in this case is "Dionysius says (*Div. Nom. IV.*), *Evil is neither a being or a good.*" Then Aquinas replies at length to the objections. Such is the system which Schrader thinks is all that the human mind can desire till the end of time.

The reverence of the Roman Catholic Church for scholasticism is one of the most astounding phenomena of modern times. Our modest Augustinian monk, who preferred to conceal his identity, writes thus on Error 13:—"The thirteenth condemnation displays, even in a human sense, the most consummate wisdom. The author of the censured opinions mean to treat faith and reason on the same level; but the full pith of the condemnation can only be felt by those who have fathomed the almost godlike intellectual strength of the medieval divines."<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of all ranks of the hierarchy to St. Thomas Aquinas is the same. One of the chief acts of Leo XIIIth was the production of a new and authoritative edition of all the great theologians'

<sup>1</sup> See my *History of University Reform*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Syllabus for the People*, pp. 32-33.



works. The Pope issued an encyclical on the subject in which these words occur, "We come now to the greatest glory of Thomas—a glory which is shared with no other Catholic doctor. In the midst of the Council of Trent, the assembled Fathers so willing it, the *Summa* lay open on the altar, with the Holy Scriptures and the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs."<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that the thirteenth century spirit and the modern spirit must differ from each other. The human mind cannot stand still. So far the contest between liberty of thought and the infallible authority of the Church has been treated of in general terms. It remains to explain the precise point at which the two came into actual collision.

<sup>1</sup> This encyclical letter *On the restoration of Christian philosophy according to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas the Angelic Doctor* will be found translated at the beginning of the literal English version of the *Summa Theologica* made by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, and dedicated to *Mariae Immaculatae, Sedi Sapientiae*. The passage here quoted is on p. xxvi., Vol. I.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LIBERALISM AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM.

THERE is, I feel sure, much misunderstanding in the public mind about the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards the Scriptures. Protestantism is regarded as the religion which bases itself on the written word. Is there not Chillingworth's oft-quoted dictum, that the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants? The view that the Bible is from cover to cover a book of infallible truth is looked upon as a peculiarly Protestant tenet. It is quite true that Protestants did hold this doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture, but it is forgotten that they took it over from the Roman Catholics. The early Christian Church had in its turn taken it over from the Jews. St. Thomas Aquinas puts the matter thus:—"Sacred Doctrine uses the authority of the canonical scriptures as an incontrovertible proof. . . . For our Faith rests upon the Revelation made to the Apostles and Prophets, who wrote the canonical books. Hence Augustine says: 'Only those books of Scripture which are called canonical have I learned to hold in such honour as to believe their authors have not erred in any way in writing them.'"<sup>1</sup> Scripture, because of its inerrancy, furnished incontrovertible proof. Such is St. Thomas's position.

The way in which this view affects the use of the Bible by the Church of Rome is very remarkable. We may again open the *Summa* at random. Here is Quaestio LI., First Article: "Whether the Angels have bodies united to them." St. Thomas in his reply to Objection I., incidentally mentions the pantheistic doctrine that God was the soul of the world.<sup>2</sup> He proceeds:—"This is contrary

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, Vol. I., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the teaching of *Averroes*, the most celebrated of the Arab philosophers, who was born in Spain and died just about the time of St. Thomas's birth.

to Catholic Faith, which asserts that God is exalted above all things according to that expression of Psalm viii. 2: '*Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens.*'" <sup>1</sup> Quaestio LIII., Article I., is whether an angel can be moved locally. The point is finally settled by a reference to Hebrews i. 14:—*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who receive the inheritance of salvation?* <sup>2</sup>

The exact point where the collision came between the Scriptures, as interpreted by St. Thomas and the Roman Catholic Church, and Science was over the first chapter of Genesis and the story of the Creation. The angelic Doctor takes everything *au pied de la lettre*. To make signifies to create out of nothing. As it is explained in Quaestio XLV., "As the generation of a man is from the *not-being* which is *not-man*, so creation, which is the emanation of all being, is from the *not-being* which is *nothing*." <sup>3</sup> This, it may be incidentally remarked, is not quite the way in which modern biology expresses itself. Further proof of the non-eternity of the material universe is given in Quaestio XLVI. and is derived from two texts:—John xvii. 5, *Glorify Me, O Father, with Thyself with the glory which I had before the world was*; and Proverbs viii. 22, *The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning.* <sup>4</sup>

The literal interpretation runs all through the treatise "Of the work of the Six Days." Creation is divided into three parts, (1) the work of creation proper; (2) the work of distinction when the light was divided from the darkness, and the waters above the firmament from the waters below the firmament; and (3) the work of adornment when God said, *Let there be lights in the firmament*. Quaestio LXVI., Article 4, discusses whether the empyrean heaven was created at the same time as formless matter. It ends with the following remarkable piece of physics from St. Basil, *It is certain that the heaven was created spherical in shape, of dense body, and sufficiently strong to separate what is outside it from what it encloses. On this account it darkens the region external to it, the light by which*

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, Vol. II., p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* Vol. II., p. 318. St. Thomas, by the way, is extraordinarily indebted to Aristotle for his wonderful knowledge about angels—not a very promising source of information one would have thought.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* Vol. II., p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* Vol. II., p. 242.

*itself is lit up being shut out from that region.* St. Thomas did not altogether agree with St. Basil's science, and adds this comment on his own account: "But since the body of the firmament, though solid, is transparent, for that it does not exclude light (as is clear from the fact that we can see the stars through it), we may also say that the empyrean has light, not condensed so as to emit rays, as the sun does, but of a more subtle nature. Or it may have the brightness of glory which differs from mere natural brightness,"<sup>1</sup>—which last sentence may be very beautiful poetry but can scarcely be called science.

St. Thomas did not find the account of the Creation at all plain sailing. Day and Night were created on the first day, but the sun was not created till the fourth day. Then there is the division of the waters by the firmament or solid vault of heaven. Those waters were a great puzzle. Specious objections had been raised to them. Here is one. "Water is fluid by nature, and fluids cannot rest on a sphere, as experience shows. Therefore, since the firmament is a sphere, there cannot be water above it." St. Thomas is driven to say, "*I answer, with Augustine that, these words of Scripture have more authority than the most exalted human intellect. Hence whatever these waters are, and whatever their mode of existence, we cannot for a moment doubt that they are there.*"<sup>2</sup> The doctrine of Scriptural inerrancy and infallibility could not be stated in stronger terms. So in many places St. Thomas is finally driven to say, "Sufficeth the authority of Scripture."

The creation of man is of course taken in all its literalness. St. Thomas writes of God's resting on the seventh day: "Nothing entirely new was afterwards made by God, but all things subsequently made had in a sense been made before and in the work of the six days. Some things, indeed, had a previous existence materially, as the rib from the side of Adam out of which God formed Eve."<sup>3</sup> Paradise was a real place, the Fall is literally true. As St. Thomas remarks: "We may add that, since man before he sinned would have used the things of this world conformably to the order designed, poisonous animals would not have hurt him."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, Vol. II., p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* Vol. II., p. 502.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* Vol. II., p. 539.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* Vol. II., p. 536.

The above quotations, which some may think both trivial and wearisome, will not have been made in vain if they enable the reader to realise the intellectual atmosphere of Roman Catholicism. St. Thomas, it will be seen, was entirely unscientific and uncritical. He is not to be blamed on that account. In his days there was no science and there was no criticism. It is the present-day leaders of the Church who are at fault in striving to put the clock seven centuries back. They have had astonishing success. Ordinary Roman Catholic mentality is seven hundred years behind the times, and shows not the slightest sign of making any real advance.<sup>1</sup>

The place where the contest broke out was in the region of astronomy, and the unwilling originator of it was Copernicus or Koppernigk, to give him his German name. He was a loyal son of the Church, being a canon of Frauenberg Cathedral. In 1530 he had completed his book *De Orbium Cælestium Revolutionibus*, in which he revived the theory known to certain of the Greek philosophers and now universally accepted, that the earth along with the other planets goes round the sun. For 13 years Copernicus hesitated to publish his conclusions because they conflicted with the scholastic theology, but in 1543 he plucked up courage, and the book appeared with a dedicatory letter to the Pope. The Pope replied by excommunicating the author, and the sentence was not revoked till 1821, or 278 years afterwards.

If Copernicus was hardly treated, the fate of his follower

<sup>1</sup> I may be permitted to give an instance of this in a passage which many will regard as a curiosity, but which is part of ordinary Roman Catholic teaching. A little while ago a correspondence took place in a denominational newspaper between a Protestant and a Catholic. The latter finished by writing: "Finally, God declared the Immaculate Conception in the Garden of Eden." He then quotes the familiar passage in Genesis iii. 15 (Vulgate) about God putting enmity between the Serpent and the seed of the woman. The words translated in the Authorised Version, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," appear in the Vulgate as follows: "Ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus." As Mr. G. G. Coulton remarks in his pamphlet, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Bible*, p. 19, "It is almost as difficult for the Church to admit the results of scholarly research in the case of the Three Witnesses as in that similar case of Genesis iii. 15, where she has for centuries supported her worship of the Virgin Mary by a Vulgate mis-translation of the original Hebrew which has long been recognised as indefensible by the large majority of Hebraists. Jerome's Hebrew scholarship was remarkable for his day; but, if he had known just enough more to translate *ipse* instead of *ipsa*, one of the bitterest disputes between Catholics and non-Catholics would have been very much simplified."



Galileo was far worse. Galileo not only adopted the Copernican theory, but openly taught that the literal acceptance of Scripture in matters scientific led to absurdities. He was hailed before the Inquisition, cast into its dungeons and finally compelled on his knees with his hands on the Gospels to renounce his errors,<sup>1</sup> after which he had to endure a further term of imprisonment. The Church acted in this fashion believing, as it then did, and, so far as I can see, as it still does, that it is possible to cure error by physical force (just as one tries to do with boys at school), or at least believing that it is possible in this way to prevent the error spreading and infecting other people.

Galileo and his fellow heretics, however, turned out to be in the right, and instead of the Church converting the scientists, the scientists converted the Church. Roman Catholics now believe, with the rest of the civilised world (at least I imagine so), that the earth goes round the sun and not that the sun goes round the earth. The Church has withdrawn the excommunication of Copernicus and no longer persecutes those who hold his theory. It has therefore changed, for all its proud motto *semper eadem*, in two respects (1) from ignorance of a natural fact to knowledge of it, and (2) to a belief that the literal acceptation of the anti-Copernican passages in Scripture is wrong.

Leaving the Copernican question for the moment on one side, let us turn to the teaching of the Vatican Council, and so bring our account of the Church's attitude up-to-date. The "decree concerning Original Sin" runs thus:—

1. "If any one does not confess that the first man, Adam, when he had transgressed the commandment of God in Paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice wherein he had been constituted, and that he incurred, through the offence of that prevarication, the wrath and indignation of God, and consequently death, with which God had previously threatened him, and, together with death, captivity under his power who thenceforth had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil, and that the entire Adam, through that offence of prevarication, was changed in body and soul, for the worse, let him be anathema."

<sup>1</sup> In June, 1633.

2. If anyone asserts that the prevarication of Adam injured himself alone, and not his posterity; and that the holiness and justice received of God, which he lost, he lost for himself alone, and not for us also; or that he, being defiled by the sin of disobedience, has only transfused death and the pains of the body into the whole human race, but not sin also, which is the death of the soul, let him be anathema; forasmuch as he contradicts the Apostle, who says: "By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned."<sup>1</sup>

Here the literal interpretation of the first chapters of Genesis is insisted on to the fullest extent. Adam is a historical person, a special creation, fashioned in innocence, not subject to death, and placed in a real garden, in which there was a real tree. There he was tempted by a real serpent and disobeyed the express commandment of his Maker. He "prevaricated," and for punishment, being before immortal, became subject to death both of the body and the soul. With the fall of Adam hereditary sin came into the world. His sin is transfused into the soul of each babe that is born of his seed, and robs it of heaven.

To the modern mind such teaching is opposed both to conscience and to science. Into the morality of hereditary guilt it is not necessary to enter. The mere statement of the doctrine ought to suffice for its condemnation. The breach with science deserves further notice, for it is far wider than most people imagine. The modern mind, we have seen, "thinks in terms of evolution." The miraculous creation of Adam in a state of innocence is the very antipodes of the evolutionary theory of the descent of man. Geology, biology, anthropology, history, comparative religion are all on the side of evolution and against the literal interpretation of Genesis. The Roman Catholic Church, untaught and undismayed by its mistake about Copernicus, is here in direct antagonism to science. As the Vatican Council put it, "The Church does not forbid that any science should in its own circle use its own principles and methods; but, while recognising this just liberty, it is vigilantly on the alert lest science, by opposing the divine teaching, should take to themselves errors, or, skirmishing beyond their own sphere,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, pp. 89-90.

should usurp and disturb the function of faith."<sup>1</sup> Darwin, with his *Origin of Species* and his *Descent of Man* went openly "skirmishing beyond his own sphere," and in consequence gravely disturbed the function of faith. Therefore he is anathema and his followers with him. Science may cultivate its own garden, but it must not trespass on the Garden of Eden. Such intrusion is fatal not only to the sacrament of baptism (which removes original sin), but to the whole Roman Catholic scheme of salvation.

The Vatican Council, having thus put itself in an untenable position with regard to certain facts of Scripture, proceeded to do the like with its theory of Scripture as a whole. The theory is thus stated: "Those books of the Old and New Testament are to be received as sacred and canonical, whole with all their parts, as they are set forth in the decree of the Council of Trent, and as they are contained in the ancient Latin Vulgate edition."<sup>2</sup> The Church holds them to be sacred and canonical, not because, being composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by her authority, not because they contain revelation free from all error, but because, written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and as such have been delivered to the Church itself."

This change of attitude about the excommunication of Copernicus is of extreme importance. It means that the Roman Catholic Church has no longer any uniform principle of Scripture interpretation. St. Thomas and the Fathers of the Church before him, notably St. Augustine, had such a principle. They took the assertions of Scripture in their obvious and literal sense. The "universal consent" of the Fathers was that the sun went round the earth. They were unanimously on the side of the Pope when he excommunicated Copernicus. The Roman Catholic Church by coming round to the Copernican theory, and withdrawing the

<sup>1</sup> *Decrees*, Chap. IV. Quoted in Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> When so much greater matters are in question, it may seem almost superfluous to remark that the Vulgate is an incorrect version of a corrupt text. Thus, in the text "Except ye repent ye shall always likewise perish," the word repent is translated by *facere pœnitentiam*, which the Church renders into English as *do penance*. The Greek word for repentance is μετάνοια a change of heart. The story of the joy of the Reformers at making this discovery is well known.

sentence of excommunication, has with its own hands knocked the bottom out of the uniform literal interpretation of the Scriptures as previously held by it, and the bottom will remain out until the Roman Catholic Church reverts to the belief that the sun goes round the earth. The Vatican Council was discreetly silent about this awkward question, and would fain have the world believe that there has never been so much as a breach in the walls so far as its interpretation of Scripture was concerned, while all the while the ancient citadel had been captured.

Further, to admit that certain passages of Scripture, if taken literally, are absurd, is to differentiate in what was before considered homogeneous, and to let in the principle of criticism. But if the principle is once admitted, where is it going to stop? Scientists have now been allowed by the Church to criticise the Scriptures by the light of their science so far as the motions of the heavenly bodies are concerned; then why not with regard to other matters in which it is alleged that Scripture contradicts Science? And if scientists have this liberty, why should it be refused to evolutionary philosophers, or historians, or higher critics, or students of comparative mythology and religion? The Church replies that the persons named "go skirmishing beyond their own spheres," and so "disturb the functions of faith," but this is to make the conflict between science and religion perpetual and without hope of truce. The present wholesale excommunication of science, for that is what it amounts to, will one day have to be withdrawn as ignominiously as was the excommunication against Copernicus. The Church, by exalting St. Thomas Aquinas, exalts ignorance, and glories in obscurantism.

There are a certain number of educated Catholics who are aware of the real state of the case. They would have the Church frankly abandon medievalism, and adopt modern scientific ways of thinking. For this reason they are called Modernists. For a brief season they made a little noise and attracted some attention. But very speedily the whole ecclesiastical machinery was put in motion against them, and they were crushed. Modernism may lurk concealed in the secret thought of a few, but its outward manifestations have come to an end. Rome remains indissolubly wedded

to the thirteenth century. The world, in spite of Mother Church, moves on, and every year the breach between it and modern civilisation grows wider. The Pope, the Cardinals, the Bishops, and the more intelligent members of the clergy, if they ever think at all, must have some bad quarters of an hour as they see thoughtful and educated people the world over less and less inclined to wear the fetters of the past, and so wandering farther and farther from the true fold, while signs of sympathy with the outcasts show themselves ever and anon within the fold itself. Attention has already been drawn to the breach between the artisan classes and organised Christianity. If there is to be a permanent breach not only with the workers but with the thinkers the outlook is black indeed.



## CHAPTER X.

### RIVAL INFALLIBILITIES.

THE Roman Catholic Church claims to be infallible, and that in a more definite and precise manner than any other religious organisation, but it is not really singular in this respect. All religions at bottom assume their infallibility. When a South Sea islander is put to death for violating the sanctity of some particular place which is "taboo," the last thought his executioners have in their minds is the possibility of their being mistaken. They believe that they are infallibly right, and the offender as infallibly wrong, and they show the strength of their conviction in the most forcible way by inflicting the extreme penalty. Greek mythology seems to the modern mind a hopeless jumble of immoral absurdities, but the Athenians took it very seriously. They charged Socrates with not believing in the State gods, and with introducing strange divinities, and sentenced him in consequence to drink the cup of hemlock—another example of the strongest proof that can be given of a belief in the infallibility of a religion.

Judaism lays claim to infallibility. If anyone doubts it let him study Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto*,—a novel no doubt, but based on facts, and a work in which we may be sure the author is not libelling his own people.<sup>1</sup> There is an incident in it which illustrates the practical working of infallibility in daily life, and so deserves quoting at some length. Hannah, the daughter of Reb Shemuel, goes through a mock ceremony of marriage with her cousin at an evening party. To their amazement the two discover that in the eye of the Jewish Law they are legally married, but a divorce is procured, and it is thought that all the consequences of the thoughtless joke have been undone. David Brandon and Hannah afterwards fall in love, and they go to Reb Shemuel's house to receive his blessing. The father learns in conversation that David is a *Cohen*, i.e. a priest, one of the "Sons of Aaron." A few

<sup>1</sup> See especially Chap. XXIV., *The Shadow of Religion*.

sentences from the original make plain the consequences of this discovery.

"Reb Shemuel's face had grown white. His hands were trembling. 'My daughter cannot marry you,' he said, in hushed quavering tones. 'A *Cohen* cannot marry a divorced woman.' 'But you surely would not call Hannah a divorced woman,' David cried hoarsely. 'How shall I not? Did not the House of Judgment authorise the divorce?' Then David burst forth: 'This is some of your cursed Rabbinical laws; it is not Judaism, God never made any such law.' 'Hush!' said Reb Shemuel sternly. 'It is the Holy Torah. It is not the Rabbis. "*Neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband; for he is holy unto his God. Thou shalt sanctify him, therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God; he shall be holy unto thee, for I the Lord which sanctify you am holy.*"'<sup>1</sup> Said David, 'I will appeal to the Chief Rabbi. He will see that our case in an exception, and cannot come under the Law.' 'The law of the Lord knows no exceptions,' said Reb Shemuel, 'it is perfect, enlightening the eyes.'" So because the rule about the priesthood is *Torah*, the infallible word of God, the Rabbi sacrifices two lives with a cruelty greater than that of Jephthah. It is this idea of infallibility, entailing unquestioning obedience and running counter to the dictates of conscience and reason alike, which caused the Roman poet to write:

"Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum."

Mohammedanism claims infallibility. At the time when these words were written the newspapers had just reported that an awkward question had arisen in Egypt about the putting to death of such Moslems as desert their faith. The Mohammedans regard all Christians as dogs and infidels, including under those appellations both Protestants and those who believe in Papal Infallibility. "There are big dogs and little dogs," they say, "and black dogs and white dogs, but they are all dogs." The Mohammedan belief in and reverence for the Koran exceeds even the faith of St. Augustine in the Scriptures.

The two great branches of the Christian Church, the East and

<sup>1</sup> Leviticus xxi. 7.

the West, each claims infallibility in its own way. The Roman Catholic Church brings the charge of schism against the Eastern Churches because they will not submit to papal supremacy, and is met by a counter-charge of heresy because of its unauthorised additions to the Christian faith. So each excommunicates the other. How is the layman born outside both these churches to decide on "*hos motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta*"? He can only fall back on private judgment and weigh the evidence for the conflicting claims.

Infallibility, then, looked at historically, is a characteristic of all religions, a stage through which they all must pass. It has its uses therefore just as chattel slavery, wage slavery, and the sentiment of loyalty have theirs. Sociologists tell us that slavery was necessary to overcome the natural laziness of human nature, and so to make men industrious. Chattel slavery has now disappeared from civilised society; it has served its purpose. Wage slavery will disappear in like manner when it is no longer needed. A Zulu, we read, would stand with his hands behind him and allow himself to be knocked on the head by his chief without reason assigned or cause shown. "The king's will must be done," he would say and that was enough. Such loyalty may have been in place when tribe cohesion was weak, and law undeveloped, but modern loyalty is of a different kind. So Infallibility may have served a good end when men's judgments were immature and needed to be held in strict restraint, but chattel slavery, wage slavery, savage loyalty (all three of them forms of obedience, be it observed) are alike outgrown, and infallibility, in the old form, is out-grown also. For obviously it destroys the faith it was intended to preserve. When there is a visible guide always at hand to which we can go for sure guidance in every difficulty we walk by sight and not by faith. The child who obeys its parents walks by sight, but it has to grow up, and so must the human race.

The Roman Catholic Church, as the foremost of the claimants to infallibility, does not let us have things all our own way in the foregoing easy fashion. The alternative to authority, it argues, is private judgment; private judgment means that each individual is free to believe exactly what he pleases, and consequently its fruit is

anarchy. Nay it goes farther, and attacks both Science and Philosophy. "Look," it says, "at Science and its boasted certainty. Its pathway is strewn with the *debris* of discarded theories, and Philosophy is in no better case. No sooner is one explanation of the facts put forward than a competing explanation starts up and overthrows it. Contrast this perpetual flux and flow of opinion, contrast the numberless discordant voices of the Protestant sects, with the one voice of the Church. The Church alone has the truth, it alone has certainty."

Let us look at the last part of this argument first. There is a sense in which both Science and Theology are fixed; there is a sense in which they are both progressive. The facts of Nature are the same now as when men first began to study them; God and His ways remained the same, but man's knowledge both of the facts of Nature, and of God and His ways increases as one generation succeeds another. There is at once permanence and the possibility of progress, but the permanent element is provided for us; it is for us to press forward to a fuller understanding of it. In this sense Theology is progressive. The Puritan fathers were convinced that there was more and more light ever ready to break out of the Divine Word. The Book of Nature also yields more and more light as men study it, so does the Book of Man. Religion is dynamic and not static, it is on the side of liberty as against repression, of growth as against stagnation.

Nor is the charge of anarchy as formidable as it looks at first sight. Science demands perfect freedom of inquiry. Is a scientist therefore at liberty to believe exactly what he pleases? Is that his claim? Not in the least; he must believe according to the facts, and it is his one desire so to do. What he wants is the facts that he may believe the truth about them. Protestants are continually being taunted by Catholics for believing what they please. They no more feel themselves free to believe as they please than to do as they please. A Protestant claims the same amount of liberty to believe a lie as to do murder or commit adultery.

As for the divisions among Protestants, there is no defence for them; they are a disgrace and a stumbling-block, but they hide more unity than outsiders give credit for, and their evil results,

though great, do not amount to anarchy. Let us take an illustration from the social order, for the voice of despotism is always the same whether it speaks in Church or State. The Czars of Russia and their mouthpiece ministers have argued very forcibly and eloquently in favour of absolutism as the only bar against political and social anarchy. If liberty is granted, so the pleas have run, there will be no fixed point at which one can stop; everyone will be free to do as he pleases; and the result—disintegration and chaos. But, in spite of all the despots, constitutional liberty exists and grows, and has at last got a foothold even in Russia.<sup>1</sup>

The results of political liberty, as is plain to see, are very much like the results of religious liberty. A bewildering variety of constitutions springs up, no State exactly resembling another State in its form of government, inside the State parties are formed; there is endless discussion and difference of opinion, and occasionally great turmoil and confusion. This state of affairs seems to the careless observer to be anarchy, but is not. The real anarchists both for Church and State are those who break the Ten Commandments, such as murderers who slay individuals, and adulterers who destroy the family, the unit out of which society has been built. It is in constitutional States that we find the greatest amount of conscious, reasoned obedience to the law because the citizens have themselves made the law reasonable and just. Constitutional States are quite as well able to deal with the social anarchists, thieves, murderers, adulterers, as is a despotism, sometimes a little more so. Protestants have done their part in the moral elevation of society in spite of their divisions, and that is the practical test. The fact thus emerges that the proper antidote to anarchy is not despotism but liberty.

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that these words were written before 1917.



## CHAPTER XI.

### CREED AND CONDUCT.

WHAT then, in its essence, is Roman Catholicism, which, with its claim to infallibility and its mighty organisation, stands in this attitude of defiance to modern civilisation, *ecclesia contra mundum*?

The question is far easier to ask than to answer, because Roman Catholicism is so many-sided and is composed of such various, not to say discordant, elements. As an author from whom we shall freely quote admits, "It is by no means easy to discover what is the essence of Roman Catholicism."<sup>1</sup> He writes thus: "Yet we might agree that the essence of Catholicism is the reception of a creed or body of beliefs on the outward visible authority of a Church, which is held to be the representative of God on earth."<sup>2</sup> He accordingly gives us an adequate account of Roman Catholicism, its body of beliefs in four columns. (1) The Apostles' Creed, (2) the Nicene Creed, (3) the Creed of Pius IV., otherwise known as the Tridentine (or Trent) Profession of Faith, and (4) the same Creed with the additions made since the Council of Trent. The present faith of the Roman Catholic Church is therefore all that the Council of Trent declared necessary to salvation, together with the addition made thereto by the Popes and the Vatican Council—a truly formidable body of doctrine. The keynote of Catholicism, then, is salvation by orthodoxy; or, as Newman puts it, "Faith is an intellectual act, its object truth, and its result knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

If, however, we continue our study a little further, it becomes clear that this is not the whole of the matter. Orthodoxy is not the only fence which guards the gate of the city of God. Here are some passages which illustrate the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments: Baptism is the first and most necessary of the Sacraments, that which, by external ablution and the invocation of the blessed Trinity, effects the spiritual regeneration of man, and cleanses

<sup>1</sup> Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* pp. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> *Idea of a University*, p. 28.

him from all his sins. . . . It is called the most *necessary* (Sacrament) because no man can enter the kingdom of heaven if he has not received baptism, even if deprived of it without any fault of his own. This necessity is called *the necessity as means*.”<sup>1</sup> And again: “This necessity is so absolute, that children dying without baptism, though innocent of all actual sin, are excluded from heaven for ever, on account of the original stain which they bear upon their souls.”<sup>2</sup> The Church could not well exclude infants from heaven because of their failure to believe the creed of Pope Pius IV. with all the canons of the Tridentine and Vatican Councils, so it keeps them out through the want of baptism, even if deprived of it through no fault of their own. Poor little babies! Is Holy Church, in thus teaching, an *alma mater* or an *injusta noverca*?

We see then that it is possible for a man to believe all the articles of the Catholic faith and yet not be saved, if he has not been baptised. By baptism he acquires a status; he ranks as a Christian by being incorporated with a visible organisation—the Church. Membership of the right organisation is thus the second thing necessary to salvation.

Salvation is obviously a very complicated and difficult process, for we are not yet at the end of the obstacles. There is a third fence in the way. Let us turn to the Church’s teaching about sins. They are of two kinds—mortal and venial. A mortal sin is so called because it brings death to the soul.<sup>3</sup> “There are some sins,” says our writer, “which by their extraordinary malice, cry to heaven for vengeance. They are the following: wilful murder; impure sins against nature; oppression of the poor, the widows and orphans; defrauding labourers of their wages.”<sup>4</sup> The Church appears in a much more humane light when it couples these last two sins with the first two than when it keeps the unbaptised innocents quite out of heaven, but this by the way. Obstinacy in sin also is viewed most severely by the Church; it is *a sin against the Holy Ghost*.<sup>5</sup>

Let us suppose then that a duly baptised Catholic, about whose orthodoxy there has never been any question, commits murder, or

<sup>1</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course of Religious Instruction*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 342.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 347.

oppresses the poor and dies impenitent. In spite of his Church membership, in spite of his orthodoxy, he dies unsaved. The Church has made a third demand of him—that he should be a certain sort of person, and he is not that sort of person. “We obtain pardon of mortal sin,” says our authority, “by the Sacrament of Penance and by perfect contrition, accompanied by an earnest desire to confess our sin.”<sup>1</sup> It is a very special sort of person that a man has to be in this case. There is an imperfect contrition called attrition. The perfect sort mentioned above is thus defined—“Perfect contrition, so called because the motives are perfect, is that which proceeds from *charity*, that is to say, from that sublime virtue by which we love God for His own sake and for His sovereign goodness.”<sup>2</sup> A steep fence this for our murderer and oppressor to surmount.

Our three fences correspond to the three things on which the Church has laid special stress during the course of its existence. At first it insisted mainly on a changed life, “If any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new.” Then the Church changed the stress to orthodoxy, and finally to membership of herself—*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. As Dr. Hatch puts it<sup>3</sup>: “There have been in fact three forms which the conception of unity has taken. In the earliest period the basis of Christian fellowship was a changed life—repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. . .

“In the second period, the idea of definite belief as a basis of union dominated over that of a holy life. . . .”

“In the third period, insistence on Catholic faith had led to the insistence on Catholic order—for without order dogma had no guarantee of permanence. . . . It was held not to be enough for a man to be living a good life, and to hold the Catholic faith and to belong to a Christian association; that association must be part of a larger federation, and the sum of such federations constituted the Catholic Church.”

Hatch further quotes St. Augustine as saying, “Suppose then a man is chaste, continent, free from greed, no worshipper of idols,

<sup>1</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course of Religious Instruction*, p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* pp. 214–215.

<sup>3</sup> *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*, pp. 187–189 (3rd edition).

given to hospitality towards those who are in need, no man's enemy, not quarrelsome, but patient, peaceful, no man's rival, envying no one, sober, frugal, but a heretic; no one can feel the slightest doubt that because of this one thing—that he is a heretic—he will not inherit the kingdom of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The second and third views obviously have a close relationship, but orthodoxy is the all-important thing. The Church's supreme function is to say what orthodoxy is. The essence of Catholicism is thus made plain. It is the reception of a creed on the authority of a Church.<sup>2</sup> We are thus once more face to face with the old controversy of creed *versus* conduct, a question touched on in the former volume, and now to be decided as far as may be.

There can be no doubt that the Roman Catholic Church puts creed before conduct. The Athanasian Creed is ample evidence on that point. Clauses 1 and 2 of it read:—

*Quicumque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est ut teneat Catholicans Fidem.*

*Quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit, absque dubio in æternum peribit.*

“Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith.

“The which except a man do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.”

And the end is like the beginning:—

*Haec est Fides Catholica, quam nisi quisque fideliter, firmiterque crediderit, salvus esse non poterit.*

“This is the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.” Holding the Catholic faith comes before all things, including conduct.

Yet so intimately is conduct concerned in the matter of salvation that in Clauses 38 and 39 when the Creed quotes Scripture, the emphasis falls on conduct. At the Resurrection “all men . . . shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.”

<sup>1</sup> *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 189 (note).

<sup>2</sup> Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 11

If salvation is by creed, it follows of necessity that the greatest and most dangerous of all sins is heresy, while the supreme virtue is obedience,—submission to that authority which can alone tell us what the exact *credenda* are. As Newman puts it: "The essence of all religion is authority and obedience."<sup>1</sup> Faith is thus identified with the submission of the intellect. "An act of faith consists in believing firmly; that is to say, in giving to revealed truths the full consent of our intellect, without even the shadow of a doubt."<sup>2</sup>

In the discussion of this question of creed and conduct let it be observed in the first place that the two, in a certain sense, always go together, and that it is both unnecessary and mistaken to set the one against the other. A belief underlies every human act, however trivial. One man believes that the best way to quench thirst on a sultry summer day is to drink hot tea. Another man believes that the most effective course is to drink iced water. The followers of the first plan are numerous in this country; the followers of the second abound in the United States. Each set acts according to its particular belief. So it is with all our actions. The principles on which they rest and which they embody constitute our real creed. It would be an interesting and salutary task for each of us to take the deeds of any one day of our lives and see the beliefs on which they rest. We should thus get at our real creed as opposed to our nominal or professed creed. Some of its articles might astonish us. Creed, then, is to be inferred from conduct. "Actions," as we were taught in our childhood, "speak louder than words." "Show me thy works," we may say, "and I, by thy works, will show thee thy faith."

But if conduct always implies creed, creed (*i.e.* professed creed) does not always imply conduct. This simple fact is really decisive of the whole controversy. It holds good of all creeds, the simplest and the most precisely formulated. Let that exceedingly plain-spoken man, St. James, answer for us, "Thou believest that there is one God<sup>3</sup>; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble."

<sup>1</sup> *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course*, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> The reference seems to be to Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." This declaration is called by the Jews the *Shemang*. The literary reader will pardon my reminding him of its dramatic introduction at the end of Chap. xv. of Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto*.



Orthodoxy is a good thing, it is well to believe in the unity of the Godhead, but it is possible to hold that doctrine and to be a devil. A goes to Church regularly every Sunday and says the Creed, thereby proclaiming his belief in God, which he thinks he really holds. He is habitually guilty of sharp practice in business. He is an atheist without knowing it. B says he has no religious beliefs, but he lives striving to love his neighbour as himself; he is nearer the kingdom of heaven than A. Many people deceive themselves when they exchange what they think a narrow creed for a liberal one. We sometimes hear a man say, "I have got rid of all dogmatic theology now; I only believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." He may hold this creed also (for creed it is), and be a devil. The formula that conduct is greater than creed has no merit in itself. It may be heartily received and loudly affirmed by one who has neither creed nor conduct.

Professor William James puts in philosophical language the point we have been trying to make:—"Both thought and feeling are determinants of conduct, and the same conduct may be determined either by feeling or by thought. When we survey the whole field of religion, we find a great variety in the thoughts which have prevailed there; but the feelings on the one hand and the conduct on the other are almost always the same. . . . The theories which religion generates, being thus variable, are secondary; and if you wish to grasp her essence, you must look to the feelings and the conduct as being the more constant element."<sup>1</sup>

James is constantly returning to this point. "Religion always exceeds our powers of formulation; and although attempts to pour its content into a philosophic mould will always go on, men being what they are, yet these attempts are always secondary processes which in no way add to the authority, or warrant the veracity, of the sentiments from which they derive their own stimulus and borrow whatever glow of conviction they may themselves possess."<sup>2</sup>

"I do believe that feeling is the deeper source of religion, and that philosophical and theological formulas are secondary products, like translations of a text into another tongue."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 504.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 430.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 431.

"The book of Job went over the whole matter once for all and definitively. Ratiocination is a relatively superficial and unreal path to the deity: 'I will lay my hand upon my mouth; I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee.' An intellect perplexed and baffled, yet a trustful sense of presence—such is the situation of the man who is sincere with himself, and with the facts, but who remains religious still."<sup>1</sup>

"What religion reports always purports to be a fact of experience; the divine is actually present, religion says, and between it and ourselves relations of give-and-take are actual. If definite perceptions of fact like this cannot stand upon their own feet, surely abstract reasoning cannot give them the support they are in need of. Conceptual processes can class facts, define them, interpret them, but they do not produce them. There is always a *plus*, a *thisness*, which feeling alone can answer for."<sup>2</sup>

Or to go back to an earlier passage where James anticipates these conclusions:—"We shall see how infinitely passionate a thing religion at its highest flights can be. It adds to life an enchantment which is not rationally or logically deducible from anything else. Religious feeling is thus an absolute addition to the subject's range of life. It gives him a new sphere of power. When the outward battle is lost, and the outer world disowns him, it redeems and vivifies an interior world which otherwise would be an empty waste. . . . Religion ought to mean nothing short of this new reach of freedom for us, with the struggle over, the keynote of the universe sounding in our ears, and everlasting possession spread before our eyes. This sort of happiness in the absolute, and the everlasting is what we find nowhere but in religion."<sup>3</sup> Such are the grounds on which James defends his being so individualistic in his views on religion and so bent on rehabilitating the element of feeling and subordinating the intellectual past.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* pp. 454-5.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* pp. 47-49.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 501. James also quotes with approval a passage from Mr. Fielding "Creeds are the grammar of religion; they are to religion what grammar is to speech. Words are the expression of our wants, grammar is the theory formed afterwards. Speech never proceeded from grammar, but the reverse. As speech progresses and changes from unknown causes, grammar must follow."*ib.* p. 436 (note).

On the other hand, feeling even of the most passionate kind has its dangers if it remains mere feeling and does not issue in appropriate action. Here we come upon sentimentalism which is twin-sister to hypocrisy. One of my boyish memories is my mother telling me that Sterne shed tears over a dead donkey, but left his own mother to die in the workhouse. I have never verified the statement, but true or false, there could be no better illustration of the positive harmfulness of feeling without right action.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RELIGION AND ORGANISATION.

OF the three bases on which the Catholic Church has successively founded itself, two—a change of heart and orthodoxy—have now been dealt with. It remains to consider the third—a fixed form of polity or organisation. It was felt that without order dogma had no guarantee of permanence. An *ecclesia docens* was necessary to say exactly, and without possibility of mistake, what doctrines were already, or should afterwards become, necessary to salvation. Church membership thus became the third and final way of salvation. From the second basis to the third the transition was short, easy and inevitable. The great gulf lies between the first basis and the second.

Science has something to tell us about organisation and its real value. Its teaching is that life produces organisation; organisation, on the contrary, though it may preserve life and promote life, can never produce it, while sometimes it destroys it. The Book of Evolution is full of organisations or organisms which have failed to adapt themselves at the right moment, and so, by choking the life which was in them, have become extinct. I once asked a Cambridge scientist when the egg first makes its appearance in the evolutionary chain. He gave me as a concrete example the *anthrax bacillus*. This infinitesimal organism, when it is placed in unfavourable surroundings, develops a rudimentary egg consisting of an elastic envelope, a speck of protoplasm and an anthrax germ. So long as the envelope remains unbroken the germ is indestructible. Should the surroundings again become favourable, the bacillus discards this protective envelope and reverts to its ordinary form. Here the priority and the superiority of the life principle are manifest. Life first makes an organisation and then discards it, because it has no longer any use for it. I cannot help feeling an admiration for *anthrax bacillus* with its initiative, its adaptability, and its determination never to be dominated by its material surroundings.

History supplements the teaching of science with warnings as to the risks and dangers of organisation. Men set up an organisation as a means to an end. The tendency of every such organisation is to become an end in itself, the end for which it was started being lost sight of. An army, for example, may be organised in order to preserve a nation's liberties; it may become an end in itself and enslave the nation it was formed to protect. This danger is common to every kind of organisation. Voluntary societies, political parties, churches, are all exposed to it. Take the Liberal Party for example. Have its advanced members never been snubbed and told that before all things it was necessary "to keep the Party together"? Have not admittedly just and necessary reforms time and again been sacrificed to party unity?

With making the organisation an end in itself, instead of a means to an end, comes a lower standard of morality. Men will do for a society, a party or a church what they shrink from doing for themselves. Responsibility is partially shifted to the organisation, and divided responsibility tends towards a lowering of the moral standard.

There was a striking example of the truth of this criticism a few years ago in the case of the Free Church of Scotland. Its most eminent scholar, Professor Robertson Smith, published certain views about the Bible which the majority of his brethren considered heterodox. Those leaders of the Church who agreed with these views had to choose between sacrificing the Professor and splitting the Church. They acted on the principle that it was expedient that one man should die for the truth. The unity of the organisation was maintained, and the great scholar passed the rest of his days as a refugee at Cambridge. Not one of those leaders would have treated a fellow-man on this wise in private life, but when it came to a question of preserving an organisation they acted as they did.

Bearing these facts in mind, I raise the question in all seriousness, Is the Roman Catholic Church, as an organisation, Christian? I say, as an organisation. That there are multitudes of individual Christians in it, no one will deny. But the question is not about individuals, but about a system of government in the direction of



which the individual Christians have no share. Has it not become an end in itself? If the interests of the Church and the interests of Christianity coincide, well and good; nobody could be better pleased than the Pope and the Cardinals. But what if the claims of Christianity pull one way, and the interests of the organisation pull another, say, in the midst of a great war where there has been a notorious violation of treaty rights, but where the offenders must not be too severely rebuked lest Church interests should suffer?

If this example is thought too recent for dispassionate examination, let us go further back and take the question of the Temporal Power of the Church. There are two significant Articles in the Syllabus, 26 and 24, which in their positive form run as follows: "The Church has an innate and legitimate right of acquisition and possession," and "The Church has the power to use external force. She has also a direct and an indirect temporal power." Are these articles strikingly Christian in tone? Do they breathe the spirit of the Gospels? Can we imagine Jesus Christ giving utterance to them? It may be replied that they embody a policy which was forced upon the Church by circumstances in by-gone days. "At the close of the sixth century," writes Döllinger, "the Pope was already the richest landowner in Italy. Large patrimonies scattered over the whole of the Peninsula, as well as in Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and even France, belonged to the Pontiff. . . . The temporal dominion of Rome fell to him as a matter of necessity and duty. The Popes were compelled to become war-leaders, to build fortifications, to enlist soldiers, and to appoint officers."<sup>1</sup> When reading these words, one cannot help thinking of the many wrong things which have been done on this plea of necessity. "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight." So spake the Founder of Christianity, while His disciple Peter could say "Silver and gold have I none," but the Roman Catholic Church has improved both on this teaching and on this practice. Out of the vast patrimonies mentioned above grew the Papal States, the loss of which in 1870 the Church has never forgiven nor forgotten.

It is not surprising that Pius IXth, the author of the Syllabus,

<sup>1</sup> *The Church and the Churches*, pp. 336-337

should have included in it Articles 24 and 26. Had he not from Gaeta called upon the Catholic Powers to restore him by force of arms? Was there not a Papal army? How were the acquisition and possession of the States of the Church to be defended unless the Church had an innate and legitimate right to them? How could the Catholic Powers be rightly appealed to unless the Church had a temporal power and the right to use force in its support?

When the Pope was finally left with two palaces and a summer residence, as ex-territorial possessions, he quarrelled desperately with the Italian Government, and excommunicated King Victor Emmanuel. He maintained that his spiritual freedom was impaired by the loss of his temporal sovereignty, and each succeeding Pope has taken the same line. They would all fain go back to the days of Hildebrand, when the Emperor went to Canossa, and did penance at the bidding of the supreme Pontiff.

This longing for the restoration of the temporal power is a standing example of spiritual blindness, blindness produced by putting an organisation before the end it was meant to subserve. Dollinger, writing in 1861, when he was in full communion with the Church, said, "The condition of the States of the Church is the heel of Achilles to the Catholic Church, the standing reproach with opponents in every part of the world, and a stumbling-block for numbers."<sup>1</sup> It was not merely the mis-government, but the existence of the Papal States which was the stumbling-block. What had the representative of the Prince of Peace to do with armies and a policy of force, with its necessary adjuncts of diplomacy and intrigue with every court in Europe? Since 1870 the scandal has ceased. The Pope no longer visibly relies on external force; his secret intrigues pass for the most part unnoticed. Being thus obliged to rely on spiritual weapons, he has gained in spiritual power, though not a single occupant of the chair of St. Peter as they discovered what is obvious to any outsider who cares to look at the facts. Christianity pulls one way; the interests of the organisation pull the other.

The Popes lay claim to infallibility. Their possession of it will not be judged by plain people on the strength of any abstract

<sup>1</sup> *The Church and the Churches*, pp. 9-10.

and technical definition, but by the simple facts of the case. What is the infallibility of a man worth who declares that temporal sovereignty is essential to his spiritual freedom when all the time it is clear that it is not, and that he is just as spiritually free without it as with it, if not more so; or who cannot see that the Church has gained by being lifted above the aims and ambitions of worldly monarchs? When the Pope had his States he had all the disadvantages with none of the advantages of worldly sovereignty. His domains were a byword and a mockery, a weakness and a reproach. Now he stands apart from the shame of it all, but still his desire is to entangle himself once again with it in the eyes of a contemptuous world.

Organisation, however, has its uses. We have spoken freely about Aristotle; let us show that we bear him no malice by quoting his well-known dictum "that man is a social (or a sociable) animal." Man is too feeble for the most part to stand alone, and so he seeks in his distress for companions to support him. Organisation he must have, but it is his weakness which impels him to it, not his strength. Organisation is at best a means and not an end. It tends to become ossified and so to cramp life and finally to destroy it. Surely Christianity, as a purely spiritual religion, has the right to adopt any form of organisation which it finds best fitted to its advancement, and to discard any form which has come to hamper it. The Christian Church began as a communistic democracy; it speedily lost the communism, but it retained the democracy for some three centuries, the best and brightest period of its history. The Roman Catholic Church has now become a centralised despotism. It is no answer to this charge to say that the Church is still a democracy because every priest is potentially a Pope. In France it is said that every private soldier carries a marshal's *baton* in his knapsack, but the French army, like all armies, is a military despotism, and the Roman Catholic Church is an ecclesiastical despotism. But if it liked to revert to a democratic form, who would think it less Christian or less Catholic on that account? On the other hand, to identify Christianity, which is a life-giving spirit, with a certain fixed and unalterable form of Church government, is to show that infallibility is compatible with an elementary blunder as to the nature of true religion.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ROAD TO ROME.

How then is it that people go over to the Church of Rome? What, for example, was the true inwardness of the great secession of the XIXth century which sprang out of the Tractarian Movement at Oxford, and in 1845 carried Newman and many others with him out of Anglicanism into Roman Catholicism? This is no idle question, for the effects of that secession are still with us, and are from time to time chronicled in the newspapers.

The first step on the road is the identification of religion with dogma, the putting of creed before conduct, and making orthodoxy the ground of salvation. The next step is the necessity which then arises of an authority to define and safeguard dogma.

Let us take two cases, the first one of our own time, that of Father Hugh Benson. Father Benson has made his *Apologia pro vita sua* under the title of *Confessions of a Convert*. It is a pathetic book, rendered still more so by the recent and untimely death of the author. He writes, "I received an invitation, a month after my ordination, to be present at a retreat given by one of the Cowley 'Fathers.' I went and was completely taken by storm. For the first time Christian doctrine displayed itself to me as an orderly scheme. . . . The work was done, though I did not know it till a year later."<sup>1</sup> The second step followed in due course. "Next I had begun to perceive that in the Church of Christ there must be some Living Voice—some authoritative person or Council which could pass judgment on new theories and answer new questions,"<sup>2</sup> or, as it is phrased a little further on, "I had come to see the need of a Teaching Church to preserve and to interpret the truths of Christianity."<sup>3</sup> The third step was to "lose confidence in the Church of England as a Divine Teacher." Then comes Rome.

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions of a Convert*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 91.



Our second example is naturally that of Newman himself. Only those who lived at the time of his going over to the Church of Rome can realise the sensation which it caused. Newman is still Rome's chief asset in this country. His writings and his example have, even at the present day, a profound influence upon many. Thus Father Benson writes: "It was [Newman's] 'The Development of Doctrine' that, like a magician, waved away the last floating mists and let me see the City of God in her strength and beauty." (*Confessions*, p. 105.) The story of how Newman came to leave the Church of England is told at length in his *Apologia pro vita sua*.

Benson came gradually to the belief that salvation is by orthodoxy; Newman started with it. He thus defines his own position:—"From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion: I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery. As well can there be filial love without the fact of a father, as devotion without the fact of a Supreme Being. What I held in 1816, I held in 1833, and I hold in 1864. Please God, I shall hold it to the end. . . . I have changed in many things: in this I have not."<sup>1</sup>

There is a surprising confusion of thought on the very surface of this passage. There cannot, we are told, be filial love without the fact of a father. But the fact of a father is not a dogma; there can be no dogma without the fact, but there can be the fact without the dogma. The dogma is an intellectual proposition about the fact, it is not the fact itself. Filial love is, if one pleases so to call it, "a mere sentiment"; it certainly is not a dogma. Children can love a father long before they can frame any mental proposition about him, before they are even able to say to themselves "my father is." The earthly analogy holds good of the things of heaven. Devotion to a supreme Being is not a dogma, but a fact, even though it partakes of the nature of a mere sentiment, and it can be felt by simple-minded individuals who would never pass muster as theologians. Are we not in fact in this high matter all as children? We take the first two letters of our alphabet and put them together, we

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 49.



reverse their order, and make a second syllable, then we put them together and say "Abba, Father." Can we really get any further? Happy are we if we can get as far as this.

Newman, having made his assumption, was immediately faced by the question, What are the true dogmas? Is each man entitled to go for himself to the Divine Word and extract therefrom a series of propositions which he is to consider essential to salvation? Anathema on any such idea, cries Newman in reply, this is the abhorred and detestable doctrine of the "right of private judgment," a doctrine which leads to anarchy and destruction.<sup>1</sup>

A second step is now necessary. There must be not merely the external authority of the Divine Word (dogmas being the propositions which rest simply on it), but a guiding authority, an *ecclesia docens* which interprets the Divine Word, and tells us what we ought to believe and what we ought not. The infallibility of the Divine Word is conceived of as needing a second infallibility to supplement and interpret it. Newman, starting with these assumptions, was at once faced with the crucial question, Is the Church of England this authority? At first he thought it might be, inasmuch as it was a branch of the Catholic Church, but as time went on the facts of the case seemed more and more against this view.

Then came a crisis.<sup>2</sup> "In the spring of 1839," he writes, "my position in the Anglican Church was at its height. I had supreme confidence in my controversial *status*. . . . About the middle of June I began to study the history of the Monophysites. I was absorbed in the doctrinal question. It was during this course of reading that for the first time a doubt came upon me of the tenableness of Anglicanism . . . by the end of August I was seriously alarmed. My stronghold was Antiquity; now here, in the middle of the fifth century, I found, as it seemed to me, Christendom of the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries reflected. I saw my face in that mirror, and I was a Monophysite. The Church of the *Via Media* was in the position of the Oriental communion, Rome was where she now is; and the Protestants were the Eutychians. Of all passages of history, since history has been, who would have thought of going to the sayings and doings of old Eutyches, that *delirius*

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 93.

*senex*, as (I think) Petavius calls him, and to the enormities of the unprincipled Dioscarus, in order to be converted to Rome?" (Who indeed? but that by the way.)

Newman goes on to say that in September an article in the *Dublin Review*, by Dr. Wiseman, on the "Anglican Claims," was put into his hands by a friend. He did not think much of it, but "my friend pointed out the palmary words of St. Augustine, which were contained in one of the extracts made in the *Review*, and which had escaped my observation, 'Securus judicat orbis terrarum.' When he was gone they kept ringing in my ears. . . . They decided ecclesiastical questions on a simpler rule than that of Antiquity. What a light was thereby thrown upon every controversy in the Church . . . that the deliberate judgment, in which the whole Church at length rests and acquiesces, is an infallible prescription and a final sentence against such portions of it as protest and secede." Newman compares the above four words of Latin to the words, "Tolle, lege,—tolle, lege" of the child who converted St. Augustine. "By these great words of the ancient Father, interpreting and summing up the long and varied course of ecclesiastical history, the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverised."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the way by which Newman went over to the Roman Catholic Church. He believed in authoritative dogma; then in an authority to decide on dogma, and the authority with the best claims to have its decisions respected seemed to him the Roman Catholic Church. All this illustrates once more the fact that the answer you get depends upon the question you ask. If you ask a question about dogma, you get an answer about dogma, but you still leave it doubtful whether you have asked the right question.

Newman begins to study the history of the Monophysites, an obscure sect in the East, whom millions of good Christians have never so much as heard of. In the course of his reading he is led to ask himself the question, "Am I a Monophysite?" His reply seems to do him less than justice. Does not his condemnation of himself remind one of the curate in *Punch* who asked a fond Mamma at an archery meeting, "Is your daughter a Toxophilite," and received the reply, "Oh dear no, I assure you she is quite orthodox!"

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 117.

Newman at this point, with his *delirus senex* and the "enormities of the unprincipled Dioscarus" as a way to Rome comes himself very near to bursting out laughing at the whole business. Had he but possessed a saving sense of humour, he might have died a member of the Church of England. If the pathway to Heaven is blocked to all who cannot clear themselves from the suspicion of Monophysitism, where are we? Surely we are hopelessly side-tracked in a metaphysical jungle. The prophet said of old, "An highway shall be there, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the way-faring men, yea fools, shall not err therein." The highway of holiness in one thing, the metaphysical jungle is another, and he who gets caught in the latter has taken the wrong turning through consulting the wrong sign-post. If you get into the jungle you may well crave an infallible guide to help you out, but is it necessary to get into the jungle at all?

We have thus briefly indicated the mental or intellectual attitude of the two converts, finding it the same in both cases. Let us now look at their emotional attitude, at the feelings they had in their hearts during this crisis in their lives; for though Newman is very scornful of "mere sentiment" in religion, he could not escape from it. He had emotions and feelings like the rest of us.

In the chapter of the *Apologia* entitled "Position of my mind since 1845" there is this passage: "Starting then with the being of a God (which, as I have said, is as certain to me as the certainty of my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into logical shape I find a difficulty in doing so in word and figure to my satisfaction) I look out of myself into the world of men and I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth of which my whole being is so full, and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself. If I looked into a mirror, and did not see my face, I should have the same sort of feeling which actually comes on me, when I look into this living busy world, and see no reflexion of its Creator. This is to me one of those great difficulties of this absolute primary truth to which I referred just now. Were it not for this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience, I should be an atheist, a

pantheist, or a polytheist, when I looked into the world. I am speaking for myself only; and I am far from denying the real force of the arguments in proof of a God, drawn from the general facts of human society, and the course of history, but these do not warm and enlighten me; they do not take away the winter of my desolation, and make my moral being rejoice. The sight of the world is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, 'full of lamentations, and mourning and woe.'"

This passage is saturated with emotion. The sin and sorrow of the world fill Newman with "unspeakable distress." He has the same feeling as he would have if he looked into a mirror and did not see his own face. Logic fails him; ratiocinative proof of the existence of a God cannot comfort him. He longs for warmth, for the sun to shine and drive away the winter of his desolation and make his heart rejoice.

But to proceed. Man being so wicked, and the world so sinful and sorrowful (and the teaching of conscience and heart being ignored as of little account), where is one to look for help? Newman continues:<sup>1</sup> "And now, supposing it were the blessed and loving will of the Creator to interfere in this anarchical condition of things, what are we to suppose would be the methods which must be necessarily or naturally involved in His purpose of mercy?"

Protestants at this point would expect to hear something about the work of Jesus Christ, who said that He came to seek and to save this lost and disordered world. But Newman says no one word. On the contrary, he narrows the point down in an extraordinary fashion. Sweeping aside any such interposition as the redemptive work of Christ, he says: "I am rather asking what must be the face-to-face antagonist, by which to withstand and baffle the fierce energy of passion and the all-corroding, all-dissolving scepticism of the intellect in religious inquiries?"

Here again the Protestant answer is that it is only the love of Christ in the soul which can withstand and baffle the fierce energy of passion, and that this same love, warming the heart and illuminating the conscience, drives away the winter of our desolation, and affords a sense of certainty against which the all-corroding,

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 243.



all-dissolving scepticism of the intellect is powerless. The metaphor which Newman thus employs is a scientific one, drawn from the action of an acid. But the precious metals are not affected by acids; they are proof against them, and if there is such a thing as the pure gold of religion, it will survive all the corroding and all the dissolving which the sceptical intellect may bring to bear upon it.

But Newman has no eye for any considerations of this kind. "The tendency (of the faculty of reason) actually and historically is towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion. No truth, however sacred, can stand against it, in the long run."<sup>1</sup> Then we are given a sketch of the action of reason, historically considered since the time of the Reformation. "Three centuries ago the establishment of religion, material, legal and social, was generally adopted as the best expedient for maintaining religion, "but now the crevices of these establishments are admitting the enemy. Thirty years ago, education was relied on: ten years ago there was a hope that wars would cease for ever, under the influence of commercial enterprise and the reign of the useful and fine arts."<sup>2</sup> The same sentence of insufficiency for the purpose has to be pronounced on Scripture, though it be divine. "Experience proves that the Bible does not answer a purpose for which it was never intended . . . in this day it begins to testify, as regards its own structure and contents, to the power of that universal solvent, which is so successfully acting upon religious establishments."<sup>3</sup>

Another emotion is now uppermost, unspeakable distress has passed to fear. What he is here so terrified about is the spirit of free inquiry which came to life again in the Renaissance and the Reformation. In his panic he demands an infallible authority to exorcise this spirit and to bring men back to the conditions which existed in the Middle Ages. There must be "a working instrument for smiting hard and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive, capricious and untrustworthy intellect." Surely we are justified in saying that there is here more fear than faith.

The same remark holds good of the other *Apologia*, the *Confessions of a Convert* by Father Hugh Benson, to which reference has already been made. Father Benson was in such fear of not believing

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 245.



the right dogmas and not finding the true Church that he brought himself into a most pitiable condition. Such phrases as these constantly recur in his book, "I went back to Addington still shaken and, so to speak, still spiritually hysterical," "I returned to Mirfield exhausted physically, mentally, and spiritually." At the time when he joined the Roman Catholic Church his "faculties had sunk into a kind of lethargy." This state of mind was so extreme that it evidently puzzled even the experienced soul-physician to whose care the neophyte had been confided. His instructor asked him whether he had any difficulties, and was not satisfied when he received the answer "No." "But surely indulgences," he said. "Again I told him that these were not the slightest difficulty. . . . But he was not quite satisfied."<sup>1</sup> Benson was not in a condition to feel a difficulty, or to feel anything; he was in a state of mental and spiritual collapse.

We conclude then that in both the cases examined above the element of fear was present along with other elements. Newman was in moral terror at the evil that is in the world, and in intellectual terror at the progress of inquiry and criticism. Benson was in spiritual terror at not believing the right doctrines, and joining the right Church. Are we here in the presence of a true understanding of Christianity? Christianity strives indeed to inspire evil-doers with fear, as does all real religion. What can be more terrifying than its warnings against the consequences of evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railings, pride, foolishness,—those evil things which proceed from the heart of man and defile him? but for the sincere and seeking soul it speaks of One who will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Dogma on the other hand is a grim master who cannot evoke love, but can and does strike fear.

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions*, pp. 130-131.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ROME'S GREATEST CONVERT.

NEWMAN has so high a reputation in the religious world that it may be accounted the height of impudence even to criticise him. But criticism in the sense of the mere pointing out of argumentative shortcomings is not the end we have in view. The *Apologia* is a human document of the deepest interest, a record of experience which can never lose its value, and so, in a lesser degree, is the *Confessions of a Convert*. In both these books light is thrown on the nature of religion, and on its workings in the human soul, and it is for the sake of this light, and not for the winning of any logical victory, that we propose to examine them.

Let us go back to the extract quoted early in the last chapter where Newman says that dogma was the fundamental principle of his religion, that he knew no other religion, and could not enter into the idea of any other religion, that religion as a mere sentiment was to him a dream and a mockery. In the very next sentence we came on sentiment in the form of filial love, and saw that neither the love nor the object of it, a father (which is implied in the word filial) can be called a dogma.

A very slight study of the *Apologia* will show that this is not the only passage where Newman fails to do justice to his own religious experience. On page 4 he says, "One of the first books I read was a work of Romaine's; I neither recollect the title, nor the contents, except one doctrine . . . viz. the doctrine of final perseverance. I received it at once and believed that the inward conversion of which I was conscious (and of which I still am more certain than that I have hands or feet) would last into the next life, and that I was elected to eternal glory." Now "inward conversion" is not a dogma, it is a spiritual experience, and the proof of its reality rests not on "mere sentiment" but on consciousness itself. So strong was this consciousness with Newman that it made him more sure of his conversion than that "he had hands or feet."

The Church of Rome did not discover to him the fact that he was converted (he had the experience while he was outside that Church), he knew it for himself with a certainty which no external authority could impart.

The dogma of final perseverance faded away from the mind of Newman, but he writes of it "that it had an influence in isolating me from the objects which surrounded me, in confirming me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, and making me rest in the thought of two and only two absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator." This second extract enforces the same lesson as the first. To Newman the existence of himself and the Creator were the two ultimate, absolute and self-evident truths. But we do not believe in our own existence because the Roman Catholic Church, or any other Church, tells us we are alive; and if the existence of God is equally clear to us, we have got behind dogma into the region of the inward light and intuitive certainty.

It is a pity, by the way, that Newman was so sceptical about the reality of material phenomena, because his own friends were to him "material phenomena," and therefore of doubtful reality. They could of course have retaliated by telling him that he was to them only a material phenomenon, and that therefore his existence was to be mistrusted. In thus speaking Newman comes perilously near, of course only in appearance, to the Eastern doctrine of *maia*, or illusion. What he had in his mind, I take it, was the transitoriness of earthy things, as expressed in the words of St. Paul, "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." But transitoriness is one thing, and unreality another. The lightning flash which killed Luther's companion at his side was transitory, but it was real enough to turn Luther's thoughts in a serious direction, and was thus, in a sense, the source of the Reformation which split the Western Church in two.

There is a third passage in the *Apologia* which is, if anything, more striking than the passages already quoted. It will be found on p. 105, "From a boy I had been led to consider that my Maker and I, His creature, were the two beings luminously such *in rerum natura*. I will not here speculate, however, about my own feelings.

Only this I know full well now, and did not know then, that the Catholic Church allows no image of any sort, material or immaterial, no dogmatic symbol, no rite, no sacrament, no Saint, not even the blessed Virgin herself, to come between the soul and its Creator. It is face to face, 'solus cum solo,' in all matters between man and his God. He alone creates, He alone has redeemed, before His awful eyes we go in death; in the vision of Him is our eternal beatitude."

"No dogmatic symbol," we are here told, is allowed by the Roman Catholic Church to come between the soul and God. There is a ground of confidence then behind and above dogma, the immediate communion, of man with his Maker.<sup>1</sup> In this last extract we have the account of a very wonderful religious experience, the highest to which the soul can attain. If it has once been with us *solus cum solo*, we have gained a certainty which no dogmatic symbol, no Church organisation can ever give us, and which the want of any dogmatic symbol or Church membership can ever take away. On this view the seat of authority is within, and religion is entirely inward and spiritual, resting on the actual experiences of the soul. Yet Newman was always afraid of this side of religion, and says nervously, "I will not here speculate about my own feelings," preferring to rest even here in the teaching of the Church; but surely William James was right when he said in words previously quoted, "If definite perceptions of fact like these cannot stand upon their own feet, surely abstract reasoning cannot give them the support they are in need of." In any case we may claim to have proved that Newman had other ideas of religion beside dogma.

We may now take a further brief glance at the extract already quoted from the chapter of the *Apologia* headed "Position of my mind since 1845." Here Newman speaks most emphatically of his intuitive knowledge of the existence of God. "The being of a God is as certain to me as the certainty of my own existence." "This great truth of which my whole being is so full." "Were it not for this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience, I should be an atheist, a pantheist, or a polytheist when I looked into the world."

<sup>1</sup> This communion *sine ullo intermedio* brings us to the region of mysticism into which it is outside the purpose of this book to penetrate further.



This inward conviction is then contrasted with the argumentative proof of the existence of God, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter, because it does not warm and enlighten, nor take away the winter of desolation and make the moral being rejoice. But does the dogmatic assertion of the existence of God do this either? That happy result can only be brought about by the inward conviction, and the sense of presence, and by loving communion. These things Newman shows us that he had. Here then, once more, we come upon intuition and not dogma, as the ultimate ground of certainty, the foundation on which the whole structure of religion is built.

Newman's defence for not putting his trust in his inward conviction is that the condition of the world outside gave the lie to it. "If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have the same sort of feeling which actually comes on me when I look into this world and see no reflexion of its Creator." It is indeed hard to see God in the mirror of human nature, so blurred is it by sin, but if there are two mirrors, one of which is blurred and the other not, does the imperfect reflexion of the first negative or detract from the value of the clear image in the second? Assuredly not. So to the soul the inward certainty remains, though the lack of the further vision tries its faith.

Nor is the outward confirmation wholly lacking. Newman was not the only man who had heard the voice and had the experience. Every man has a conscience, however imperfectly it works, or had a conscience until he destroyed it by his own act. If there is this universal element of the divine in human nature, why need we despair of any, and why should one in whom conscience shone with so clear a light as it did with Newman, refuse to trust in it, and rush instead into the arms of an outward authority, a visible organisation? The sins and sorrows of the world are bad enough, but fear and panic do not help a man; they only blind his eyes to the rock of certainty on which he is standing all the time.

The *Confessions of a Convert* exhibits the same features as the *Apologia*. Benson goes somewhat farther than Newman. He does not teach intuition and then ignore it; he attacks it. He had written a book called *The Light Invisible*; this he came to consider "rather a mischievous book, since it implies that what I then strove



to believe was spiritual intuition—and what is really nothing but imagination—must be an integral element in spiritual experience; and that sight—or rather personal realisation—must be the mode of spiritual belief rather than the simple faith of a soul which receives divine truth from a divine authority.”<sup>1</sup> Here intuition is dismissed as “nothing but imagination,” which means, if the words are pressed, that it is an unreality and a delusion, while faith is identified with obedience to authority. The same idea is repeated a few lines lower down. “For Catholics the point is . . . that the Will should adhere and the Reason assert.” The adhesion of the will is obedience, what the assertion of Reason means in this connexion I find it difficult to determine. Is it the mere utterance of a dogmatic creed?

But intuition soon comes into her own again. On the next page we read,<sup>2</sup> “There are two things in the reception of grace—the fact and the mode. The fact is a matter of spiritual intuition. As regarded the actual communications between our Lord and my soul—granted above all at moments of great solemnity—I neither had nor have the slightest doubt.” Here are actual spiritual experiences, and quite independent of Church connexion, for Benson enjoyed them both as an Anglican and as a Roman Catholic.

A little further on imagination is in its turn rehabilitated along with the entire range of human capabilities of religion, “For one thing began to emerge ever so slowly, namely, that intellect alone could prove very little. The puzzle which God had flung me consisted of elements which needed for their solution not the head only, but the heart, the imagination, the intuitions; in fact, the entire human character had to deal with it. . . . I must not seek to test the elusive ethereal whole by but one faculty of my nature.”<sup>3</sup> It is delightful to come thus suddenly on the view which has been upheld in both our volumes—that we are religious not as theologians and philosophers, but as men and women, or in other words, that religion is for life and not for knowledge solely or chiefly. Here is the cardinal point of the whole controversy. The entire human character must be brought in. We conclude then that both Newman and Benson had other ideas about religion beside dogma.

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions of a Convert*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* pp. 98–99.

## CHAPTER XV.

### REASON AND RELIGION.

"ONE thing began to emerge," we found Father Benson saying, "that intellect alone could prove very little." What then is the part which intellect or reason plays in religion? Any attempt at an answer is sure to be difficult and tedious to follow, but for all that it must be made. If we go back to Newman and try to obtain from him a solution of the problem, we find ourselves as before involved in at least seeming contradiction. To begin with, he gives us two views of human reason, one favourable, the other unfavourable. Let us first consider the unfavourable view.

Note A in the *Apologia* is devoted to a discussion of Liberalism, which is the assertion of the rights of reason in their extreme form, the demand that everything shall be open to its scrutiny and the refusal to believe anything which cannot be proved by coercive argument. Newman here gives us a glimpse of his environment at Oxford, and the effect it had on him. He was a Tory, and as such was alarmed at the activity of the reformers in the University. He thought that these gentlemen "were exposed to the evils of what is called 'the pride of reason.'" He continues: "Whenever men are able to act at all, there is the chance of extreme and intemperate action, and therefore, when there is exercise of mind, there is the chance of wayward or mistaken exercise. Liberty of thought is in itself a good, but it gives an opening to false liberty. Now by Liberalism, I mean false liberty of thought, or the exercise of thought upon matters in which, from the constitution of the human mind, thought cannot be brought to any successful issue, and therefore is out of place. Among such matters are first principles of whatever kind; and of these the most sacred and momentous are especially to be reckoned the truths of Revelation. Liberalism then is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of

propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine Word."<sup>1</sup>

Newman in this passage casts his net very wide. He bans the exercise of thought on first principles of any kind. One wonders whether the first principles of mathematics and logic are included. Newman was probably not thinking about either the one or the other; his anxiety was for two things—morality and, before all things, dogma, which last he declared to be the only form of religion he knew. About these there must be no questioning, our sole duty is to submit to and accept the conclusions of an infallible authority. Here we are fairly at the antipodes of Liberalism. We are back to the doctrine of *taboo* in the realm of thought. The dogmatic theologian forbids us under pain of spiritual disaster or even death, to enter on certain sacred ground and examine it for ourselves. The doctrine of original sin is included among the "propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine Word." As we saw, the doctrine of original sin carried with it for Roman Catholics the first chapters of Genesis and the Garden of Eden, so that there is here a very literal *taboo*. But for modern civilisation *taboo* is gone as far as places, things and persons are concerned; can it be maintained in the realm of mind and thought?

Against the foregoing unflattering estimate of the human mind may we set the other which Newman gives? "I know that even the unaided reason, when correctly exercised, leads to a belief in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in a future retribution"<sup>2</sup>—three beliefs, one would have thought, which must be reckoned among "the truths of Revelation," and if reason is competent for the discovery of these profoundest of mysteries, what limit can we put to its powers? The solution of this contradiction is to be looked for, I imagine, in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, that there are certain truths which can be known by the unaided reason, and certain truths that can only be known as dogmas, the first constituting natural religion, and the second revealed religion. The existence of God and the immortality of the soul would come under the first designation; the doctrine of the Trinity is an example

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 243.

of the second. Can this distinction however be maintained in all this sharpness? It seems to me that it cannot, but that is a point which need not be discussed at present.

To go back to Newman on Liberalism. Most significant is his definition of it as "the exercise of thought upon matters, in which from the constitution of the human mind thought cannot be brought to any successful issue." Under these words lies, not faith, but scepticism. Compare with it a passage from Mr. Bertrand Russell. "There are many questions—and among them those which are of the profoundest interest to our spiritual life—which, so far as we can see, must remain insoluble to the human intellect unless its powers become of quite a different order to what they are now. Has the universe any unity of plan or purpose, or is it a fortuitous concourse of atoms? Is consciousness a permanent part of the universe, giving hope of an indefinite growth in wisdom, or is it a transitory accident on a small planet on which life must ultimately become impossible? Are good and evil of importance to the universe or only to man?"<sup>1</sup> The two positions are identical; it is a case of extremes meeting; though the conclusions drawn differ, Mr. Russell, as I understand him, speaks as an Agnostic; the human mind cannot read these riddles, let it reverently confess its weakness and its ignorance. Newman postulates an infallible authority to help him out.

The limited range of the intellect being granted, does it follow that human nature is entirely helpless? Is it obliged to choose between blank negation and blind surrender? Has it no other resources within itself? If the road of knowledge stops short, are there no other roads? These are crucial questions, and the answer to them is that man is not at the end of his resources. His three ideals of Beauty, Truth and Goodness are all highways to the Divine. Knowledge may for the present fail us; at best we "know in part," but Beauty and Goodness still avail, Goodness most of all.

Take as a preliminary example the oft-quoted saying of Kant's that two things filled him with wonder—the starry heavens and the moral nature of man. The starry heavens appealed to his sense of sublimity, which is only another name for the sense of beauty.

<sup>1</sup> *Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 240-241.



The moral nature of man appealed to his sense of goodness, he saw its possibilities and its profound implicates. Both appeals produced the feeling of wonder, which, if not religion itself, is religion's native air, according as it is said, "He that wonders shall reign, and he that reigns shall rest."

The same writer in his *Critique of Pure Reason* has some highly ingenious verbal subtleties which show the difficulties inherent in the argumentative proofs of God's existence. He never refuted these difficulties, but in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, when it became a question of the will and of action, the ideas of free-will, the immortality of the soul and of God, recover the certainty which purely abstract reasoning had been unable to give to them.

The point we are endeavouring to make may also be illustrated from actual experience. Romanes wrote a book entitled *A Candid Examination of Theism*, which he published under the name of "Physicus." So far as I know its arguments have never been fully answered, perhaps cannot be, but Romanes before he died wrote another book entitled *Thoughts on Religion*. In it he did not so much attempt to prove that his former arguments were fallacious, as approach the subject from a different standpoint. As he puts it, "It is generally assumed that when a man has clearly perceived agnosticism to be the only legitimate attitude of reason to rest in with regard to religion, he has thereby finished with the matter; he can go no further. The main object of this treatise is to show that such is by no means the case. He has then only begun his enquiry into the grounds and justification of religious belief. For reason is not the only attribute of man, nor is it the only faculty which he habitually employs for the ascertainment of truth. Moral and spiritual faculties are of no less importance in their respective spheres even of everyday life; faith, trust, taste, &c., are as needful in ascertaining truth as to character, beauty, &c., as is reason. Indeed we may take it that reason is concerned in ascertaining truth only where *causation* is concerned; the appropriate organs for its ascertainment where anything else is concerned belong to the moral and spiritual region."<sup>1</sup> Romanes's editor (Dr. Gore) thus summarizes his position: "Scientific ratiocination cannot find adequate

<sup>1</sup> pp. III-II2.



grounds for belief in God. But the pure agnostic must recognise that God may have revealed Himself by other means than that of scientific ratiocination. As religion is for the whole man, so all human faculties may be required to seek after God and find Him."<sup>1</sup>

As an example of what Romanes meant, take such a brief utterance as this: "The human heart refuses to believe in a universe without a purpose."<sup>2</sup> The intellect may find the demonstration of what that purpose is too hard for it, but the heart says there must be and is a purpose. Man when his reason is baffled falls back upon feeling which works by intuition. He trusts his intuition and so arrives at faith.

Mr. Bertrand Russell, too, when he touches on action and emotion, comes at least to the very brink of religion. He says: "The impartiality which, in contemplation, is the unalloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that universal love which can be given to all, and not only to those who are judged useful or admirable."<sup>3</sup> When we speak of justice where can we hope to find it in perfection save in One who will "render to every man according to his works"? and as for "universal love which can be given to all, and not only to those who are judged useful and admirable," how can we attain to it unless we are the "sons of the Father in heaven," who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust," and "is kind toward the unthankful"?

We find ourselves then in entire agreement with the text that Benson has found for us, even though he did not keep to it but went aside in search of dogmatic certainty and an authority to guarantee it. Newman, however, will have none of these parleyings with the enemy, yet how strange it is that he who is so unmeasured in his condemnation of the intellect as unable to come to any right conclusion as to the truths of revelation, should yet hold and enforce such an entirely intellectual view of religion itself. Here is his stern denunciation of feeling in religion: "The religious world, as it is styled, holds, generally speaking, that religion consists

<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Temple, *Essays and Reviews*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 249.

not in knowledge, but in feeling or sentiment. The old Catholic notion, which still lingers in the Established Church, was that Faith was an intellectual act, its object truth, and its result knowledge. . . . But in proportion as the Lutheran leaven spread, it became fashionable to say that Faith was not an acceptance of revealed doctrine, not an act of the intellect, but a feeling, an emotion, an affection, an appetency, and as this view of Faith obtained, so was the connexion of Faith with Truth and knowledge more and more either forgotten or denied. At length the identity of this so-called spirituality of heart and the virtue of faith was acknowledged on all hands. [Men] came to think that Religion, as such, consisted in something short of intellectual exercises, viz. in the affections, in the imagination, in inward persuasions and consolations, in pleasurable sensations and sublime fancies."<sup>1</sup> It may be remarked in passing that the acceptance of a doctrine without proof or without an understanding of its meaning is obviously an act of the will, not of the intellect. It is obedience, not faith.

"Religious doctrine," Newman says a little further on, "is knowledge in as full a sense as Newton's doctrine is knowledge";<sup>2</sup> and again, "By Theology I simply mean the Science of God, or the truths we know about God put into a system; just as we have a science of the stars, and call it astronomy; or of the crust of the earth, and call it geology."<sup>3</sup> If Theology is no more than astronomy and geology how can it "warm" as well as enlighten "the soul"; how can it "take away the winter of our desolation and make our moral being rejoice"?

It is a thousand pities that Newman and the Catholic Church with him should thus exalt truth at the expense of goodness, pit the head against the heart, and make a schism in the soul of man. Intellect and emotion and all the faculties should be brought into accord and make one music.

Here then are two different conceptions of religion standing in antagonism; they may be broadly described as Priests' religion and Prophets' religion (not that the pure type of either exists, both the two are found mixed in varying proportions). The former begins

<sup>1</sup> *Idea of a University*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 61.

at the top with knowledge warranted free from all taint of error, coming through a visible organisation; within the organisation there are two classes, the governing and the governed, priests and people. In the hands of the priests are the sacraments—the channels along which the Divine aid flows into the soul. Religion is thus intellectual, dogmatic, authoritative, institutional, collective, outward, sacerdotal, sacramental, mediate, legal. The second type begins from below with experience; its emphasis is on goodness, and its look therefore is toward action and the springs of action, towards the things which move men, feelings, emotions, needs, affections, aspirations. Religion is thus inward, personal, individual, spontaneous, free, immediate, evangelical, spiritual, not ashamed of but rejoicing in the "Lutheran leaven," and desirous that it should leaven the whole lump. The two correspond to the two chief types of human nature—the Conservative and the Liberal; the static and the dynamic; Authority is the watchword of the one, Liberty the watchword of the other. The Priest is always on the side of precedent, of established custom, of fixed belief; the Prophet is the daring innovator who opens new paths, and climbs fresh heights, often getting crucified for his pains. The two types of religion may well be complementary to each other, at present they are hopelessly at variance.

But we are wandering away from the point; the return however is easy. Whether Newman is right or wrong in his charge that the connexion of Faith with Truth and Knowledge was either forgotten or denied, he points out a danger, and lays his finger on a weak spot. There is the danger that emotion should make its escape from knowledge and fly away on a devious course of its own. William James has dealt with the point so clearly that I make no apology for adding another to my numerous quotations from him. He holds that "feeling is the deeper source of religion," but adds: "But even if religious philosophy had to have its first hint supplied by feeling, may it not have dealt in a superior way with the matter which feeling suggested? Feeling is private and dumb, and unable to give an account of itself. . . . Philosophy takes just the opposite attitude. . . . To find an escape from obscure and wayward personal persuasion to truth objectively valid for all thinking men

has ever been the intellect's most cherished ideal. To redeem religion from unwholesome privacy, and to give public status and universal right of way to its deliverances, has been reason's task.

"We are thinking beings, and we cannot exclude the intellect from participating in any of our functions. Even in soliloquising with ourselves, we construe our feelings intellectually. . . . Moreover, we exchange our feelings with one another, and in so doing we have to speak, and to use general and abstract verbal formulas. . . . But all these intellectual operations presuppose immediate experiences as their subject matter. They are operations after the fact, consequent upon religious feeling, not co-ordinate with it, not independent of it."<sup>1</sup> Here then is the task of the intellect, and if it is rightly performed we shall come in the end, not to systems of dogmatic theology, but to a scientific religion, a religion based on experience, clarified by knowledge, and capable of verification after its own fashion.

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 431-433.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ROME'S AIDS TO REASON.

THE attitude of mind on the heretic's part which has been indicated in the foregoing chapter is so reasonable that the Roman Catholic Church recognises it as such, however much that assertion may astonish the majority of Protestants. "The Vatican Council is really notable, not as the careless observer may think, for defining the dogma of Papal Infallibility, but for traversing the much more pressing question of the reasonableness of faith, and the faithfulness of reason."<sup>1</sup> So says a recent writer. The "careless observer" will probably remain of the opinion that if the latter question only had been at stake the Vatican Council would never have been held. The same author continues: "Since man is wholly dependent upon God, and created reason is absolutely subject to uncreated Truth, we are bound to yield full obedience of understanding and will to God by faith in His revelation. . . . But in order that the homage of our faith might be in harmony with reason, God willed that there should be added to the internal helps of the Holy Spirit exterior proofs of His revelation, namely, divine facts, and, beyond all, miracles and prophecies. . . . For to the Catholic Church alone belong all those many and so wonderful signs which have been divinely arranged as evidence of the credibility of the Christian faith. And the Catholic Church itself, by its wonderful spreading abroad, its eminent holiness and inexhaustible fruitfulness in every good work, by its Catholic unity and unconquerable stability is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an incontestable testimony to its own divine mission."<sup>2</sup>

Prophecy, as an evidence of Christianity, has a long, curious and interesting history. It formed a most important part of the instruction given to catechumens or candidates for admission to the Church. The earliest Christian teachers were not in advance of

<sup>1</sup> Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* pp. 22-25.



their own age and demanded an infallible authority as a foundation upon which to build. This lay ready to their hands in the Old Testament, especially in the prophetic portions of it. The first recorded instance of such catechetical instruction is to be found in the last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, where our Lord Himself is represented as giving it to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. "And He said unto them: 'O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?' And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

So, too, in the eighth chapter of Acts, Philip finds the Ethiopian eunuch reading a passage from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. The eunuch asks whether the prophet speaks of himself or of some other man. "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus."

So again in the fifteenth chapter of Acts when the first Council of Jerusalem was discussing the admission of Gentiles to the Church, St. James decided the point by an appeal to prophecy.

"And James answered, saying, 'Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

After these things I will return,

And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up:

That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,

And all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called,

Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world."

Such then was "the word of prophecy made more sure" which the author of the Second Epistle of St. Peter exhorted his readers to "take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." Those who desire to see its full development will find it in the *Catechising* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

Prophecy is but a special form of the miraculous, and undoubtedly the miraculous has made a great appeal to the human mind in days gone by. But habits of thought change, and the question is, Are prophecy and miracles forms of evidence which appeal to the modern mind? Have they not rather become difficulties? Instead of imparting faith to us, do they not come with a demand that we should have faith in them, and so put an additional burden of belief upon us? Prophecy was a favourite weapon in the hands of the apologist until quite recently. Keith on *Prophecy*<sup>1</sup> was a book once widely read. Is it read now? Has not the Higher Criticism played havoc with this form of evidence? Are there not prophecies which have become stumbling-blocks, and which necessitate a new theory of inspiration? The subject is too wide to go into here, but the change of attitude on the part of the Churches is obvious to all. Does even the Roman Catholic Church strive to convert present-day sceptics by referring them to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament?

Then there are miracles. The attitude towards miracles has changed even more strikingly than the attitude towards prophecy.<sup>2</sup> Matthew Arnold once asked whether if a man changed a pen into a pen-wiper he was therefore to be regarded as a divine teacher. The answer to this question is "most certainly not." The discovery of truth implies a certain inward disposition of mind, the single eye which recognises truth on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it implies something recognisable as truth in the authorities in question. Even the author of the Second Epistle of St. Peter regards the lamp of prophecy as secondary. It is no longer needed when the day dawns and the day-star arises in the heart because Christ is then recognised as the true light of men. If a would-be teacher has not this attribute of recognisable truth no amount of changing pens into pen-wipers will enable him to carry conviction, and if he has this attribute his magical powers become superfluous.

<sup>1</sup> The latest edition in the Cambridge University Library is the 40th, published in 1873.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Essays and Reviews*, p. 140. "If miracles were in the estimation of a former age among the chief supports of Christianity, they are at present among the main *difficulties* and hindrances to its acceptance." *Essays and Reviews* was published in 1861.

The miraculous element, though it abounds in the New Testament, is not the supreme thing. The attitude of the Fourth Gospel is the same as that of the Synoptics. "Believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake" (that is, believe in Me as possessing a certain character, as having a certain disposition). Those who believe for the works' sake believe because they see. Those who have the inward recognition of truth are blessed because they have not seen and yet believe. Miracles bring with them the demand for outward evidence which means the critical examination of testimony, and all the perplexities of historical investigation—a desert region this, which most do well to avoid. They bring, too, perplexing philosophical problems of the uniformity of nature, and the violation of natural law and other difficult questions. The real proof of Christianity must surely be of a simpler kind.

Lastly there is the Catholic Church itself as an external evidence of the truth of Christianity. The Church *as an organisation* is the greatest stumbling-block of the three. It was as an organisation that the Church attracted the notice of Constantine, and led him to patronise it in the hope of finding a stable element in those unstable times. It was as an organisation, not as a religious society, that Constantine joined the Church with his hands red with murder, and put off his baptism till his death-bed that he might sin securely up to his latest moments—one of the most cynical pieces of immorality in history, which was rendered possible by the superstitious and immoral doctrine of the Church about baptism.

When the Church became established the troubles of Christianity did not end, as was fondly imagined; they began. The union of Church and State secularised the Church more than it Christianised the State, as it always does. Nevertheless the Syllabus, blind to the lessons of history, condemns as an error that "The Church ought to be separated from the State."<sup>1</sup> With the establishment of Christianity, Church office became a main road to political power, and the scandals which resulted are as painful

<sup>1</sup> Article 55. The Augustinian monk's comment is: "The fifty-fifth error in the intention of its framer, mighty be fitly embodied thus: Atheism is the only fit religion of States," pp. 41-42.

reading as anything in history. The scandal remains in some degree to this day. Rome now oscillates between pious Popes and political Popes. With a political Pope statecraft and diplomacy revive, with their accompaniments of secret intrigue and the playing off of one power against another. Now and again the conscience of the world is shocked by the discovery of some peculiarly odious underground proceeding. As Newman himself put it: "The Rock of St. Peter on its summit enjoys a pure and serene atmosphere, but there is a great deal of Roman malaria at the foot of it."<sup>1</sup> If outsiders are more conscious of the malaria than of the pure and serene atmosphere, who can blame them?

Then as to its wonderful spreading abroad. Do Roman Catholic writers ever think of the spread of Mohammedanism and the ravages it made of Christian territory? Mohammed was born in 569 A.D. In 609 he appeared in the character of a prophet. The battle of Tours was fought in 732 A.D. In that brief space of 123 years the Christian Church lost all that it possessed in Asia, including its birth-place Jerusalem, all that it possessed in Africa, and a large portion of Europe. So rapid and irresistible was the spreading abroad of Mohammedanism that its leaders entertained the idea of completing the circuit via France by way of Rome and Constantinople back to Damascus. The loss of so much territory was not caused by the Church's "eminent holiness and inexhaustible fruitfulness in every good work," but by its ever-growing superstition and corruption. Mohammedanism never came to terms with heathenism; it abolished it utterly. The Church had to come to terms with heathenism. After Constantine, the worship of the Virgin Mary, of Saints and angels came into prominence, along with many pagan ideas and practices. As Gibbon puts it: "The Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism: their public and private vows were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East: the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs and saints and angels, the objects of popular veneration."<sup>2</sup> Mohammedanism swept the scenes of this degraded worship, and no counter-attack

<sup>1</sup> *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. 2.



has prevailed against it. Spain has been recovered for Christianity, but that is all. Islam holds all the north of Africa, where it is still steadily pressing southward, its adherents are found as far west as Bosnia and Albania, while in Asia it has spread on all sides, as both the Russian and British empires bear witness.

When Catholic writers speak of the "eminent holiness" of the Church, the layman thinks of it in its character of persecutor, how it began with the heathen and went on with the heretics; of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the fires of Smithfield and the terrors of the Holy Inquisition.

What does impress the beholder more favourably is the great host of good individuals in the Church, not merely the martyrs and the saints, but the humble people who have lived loving and unselfish lives—who have proved themselves the salt of the earth, and a true light in a dark world. But these "pure and pious souls" are not confined to the Roman Catholic Church. They have been and are to be found in the schismatic Churches of the East and in the heretical Churches of the West. They and their Roman Catholic brethren and sisters go to make up one visible yet spiritual community so far as that ideal has yet been realised on earth.

These three aids to faith, then, when examined, are all found to be difficulties, and that the Vatican Council thought it worth while to put them forward afresh is one more proof how hopelessly medieval the Roman Catholic Church is, how entirely it fails to read the signs of the times, and how little it can understand the workings of the modern mind or the perplexities of present-day seekers after the truth.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### ROME FROM THE INSIDE.

NEWMAN, according to his own account, having no idea of religion except dogma, necessarily rejected the right of private judgment. Yet the *Apologia* is the history of one of the most painful and prolonged exercises of private judgment on record. The author of it felt morally bound to find the true Church, the pillar and ground of dogmatic certainty. He had to make the search and weigh the evidence for himself; no one could do it for him. The *Confessions of a Convert* is also a painful record of private judgment prolonged to the point of physical and spiritual collapse.

If Newman could not escape from the exercise of private judgment outside the Church of Rome, neither could he inside it. Speaking of that volume of St. Alfonso Liguori's Sermons, which had been presented to him immediately on his admission to the Catholic Church, he writes:<sup>1</sup> "Now it must be observed that the writings of St. Alfonso, as I knew them by the extracts commonly made from them, prejudiced me as much against the Roman Church as anything else, on account of what was called their 'Mariolatry'; but there was nothing of the kind in this book. I wrote to ask Dr. Russell whether anything had been left out in the translation; he answered that there certainly were omissions in one Sermon about the Blessed Virgin. This omission, in the case of a book intended for Catholics, at least showed that such passages as are found in the works of Italian authors were not acceptable to every part of the Catholic world. Such devotional manifestations in honour of Our Lady had been my great *crux* as regards Catholicism; I say frankly, I do not fully enter into them now; I trust I do not love her the less, because I cannot enter into them. They may be fully explained and defended; but sentiment and taste do not run with logic: they

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 194.

are suitable for Italy, but they are not suitable for England. But, over and above England, my case was special."

The first thing which strikes the ordinary man in reading this paragraph is the low standard of truthfulness which prevails in the Roman Catholic Church, permitting it, as it does, to offer one sort of spiritual wares in Italy and another sort of spiritual wares in England, though both purport to be the same. The one holy apostolic Roman Church ought to rise above the morals of commercialism, which provides the public with what it likes, and not with what is best for it.

The main point, however, is this, that Newman exercised his own private judgment on certain portions of Catholic teaching. He speaks of these devotional manifestations in honour of the Virgin Mary as "not acceptable to every part of the Catholic world," implying thereby that other members of the Church exercised the same right of private judgment as he did. He could not "fully enter into them" even after he had joined the Church of Rome, and pronounces them "not suitable for England nor for his own case, which was "special." The basis of his judgment is noteworthy. "They may be fully explained and defended," he says, "but sentiment and taste do not run with logic," that is, Newman here appeals from the verdict of reason as pronounced by logic, to his instinctive feelings of beauty, thus aptly illustrating the dictum of Romanes that "faith, trust, taste, &c., are as appertaining to truth as to character, beauty, &c., as is reason." A forcible contrast here with Newman's denunciation of feeling in other passages of his writings.

Then again he says that, over and above these devotions not being suitable for England, his own case was special. But when it comes to the right of private judgment—to a man calling his soul his own, are we not all special cases?

There is another point on which Newman exercised his right of private judgment, and that was about this same saint, Alfonso Liguori and his doctrine of truthfulness. He says: "I avow at once that in this department of morality, much as I admire the high points of the Italian character, I like the English rule of conduct better."<sup>1</sup> The said English rule of conduct gave Newman a more

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 273.

"pleasurable sensation" than the Italian, and on this ground of feeling he adjudged it to be the better of the two—a piece of private judgment based on intuition.

Newman did not like the Syllabus; he even tried to argue that the Pope had never authorised it. On the occasion when Mr. Gladstone rushed into the fray with his pamphlet on Vaticanism, in which he attacked the Syllabus and held that its teaching was incompatible with loyalty to the Throne, Newman was noticeably slow in replying. When his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* did at length appear it contained a noteworthy passage. The question of loyalty had been put in a very concrete form. Ought a Roman Catholic to drink to the Pope first or the King first? Newman replied: "Certainly, if I am obliged to bring religion into after-dinner toasts, I shall drink to the Pope—still to conscience first and to the Pope afterwards."<sup>1</sup> "To conscience first"—the most ardent Protestant could not desire a plainer statement of his own position. The above instances may seem to be but the mere ghost of the right of private judgment, but there they are, and they perhaps explain why Newman was regarded with suspicion by a certain section of the Roman Church as not being a good Catholic.

What then is this right of private judgment? It is simply another name for individual moral responsibility. Take, for example, the language of Dr. Pusey to Mrs. Besant as previously quoted: "It is your duty to accept and believe the truth as laid down by the Church. At your peril you reject it. The responsibility is not yours so long as you dutifully accept that which the Church has laid down for your acceptance." Authority eases us of our responsibility; private judgment lays it upon us as a burden that we each must bear if we are to remain moral agents. Authority, by divesting a man of responsibility, turns him into a machine. Sometimes there is much to be said for this particular operation—in military matters for instance. But a soldier so far as he acts under authority ceases to be a moral agent. "I obeyed orders" is sufficient plea for every accusation which is brought against him. To hold that it is an insufficient plea is to bring back the right of private judgment. The armies of this world may be framed on this

<sup>1</sup> *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, p. 74.

model, but the army of the Lord of Hosts is on a different basis, St. Ignatius Loyola notwithstanding.

Newman then failed by joining the Church of Rome to get rid of what he feared and would rather have been without; did he succeed in getting what he fain would have had? We saw him looking on the sin and sorrow of the world, face to face with the mystery of evil. He calls it a vision to dizzy and appal, a profound mystery which is absolutely beyond human solution.<sup>1</sup> Has the Roman Catholic Church any divine solution of this mystery? She has none, and to her great credit has never claimed that she has. Newman got no more light on his primal difficulty inside the Church of Rome than he had outside it.

Father Benson is hopeful that the light will come and the mystery be solved. He writes: "I do not say that all difficulties went at once (on joining the Roman Catholic Church). They did not. In fact, I do not suppose that there is any Catholic alive who would dare to say that he had no difficulties even now; but 'ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.'<sup>2</sup> There remain always the old eternal problems of sin and free will; but to one who has once looked full into the eyes of this great Mother, these problems are as nothing. She knows if we do not; she knows, even if she does not say that she knows; for within her somewhere, far down in her great heart, there lies hid the very wisdom of God Himself."<sup>3</sup> But when Browning sings

"God's in His heaven—  
All's right with the world,"

does not his own inward conviction reach as far as the Church itself can carry him? In any case, the world has still to wait for the great pronouncement which is to come.

Newman again dreaded modern thought and the progress of critical inquiry. He wanted "a working instrument for smiting hard and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive, capricious, untrustworthy intellect." The Roman Catholic Church

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>2</sup> This is a quotation from the *Apologia*, p. 239. Most people will think that this is scarcely a self-evident proposition. One difficulty may give rise to many doubts.

<sup>3</sup> *Confessions*, pp. 110-111



has indeed smitten with all its might, but has it thrown back the aggressive intellect? What is more remarkable than the way in which the spirit of inquiry is spreading in all directions, even into the deep things of religion itself? *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is a sign of the times. The only effect of smiting hard has been to widen the breach between religion and modern thought, a result we have already deplored.

But if Newman got less than he wanted in some respects, there was one thing of which he got more than he wanted, and, strange to say, it was dogma—the only idea of religion he believed he had. The history of dogma, or, in other words, of the development of Roman Catholic belief, is so remarkable that we must stay a moment to consider it. No one can read the Synoptic Gospels without being struck by the undogmatic character of Christ's teaching. That teaching is first and foremost practical, its aim is the changed life, and it is only dogmatic so far as is necessary for coherence' sake. The Fourth Gospel contains, so to speak, the raw material for a theology; in the Epistles the theology, especially the soteriology or the way of salvation, begins to appear, but it is still informal and elementary. The first dogmatic and authoritative pronouncement of the Church is at the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325. Then follow other Councils, and the Athanasian Creed which is peculiar to the West. After the great schism came the Lateran Council, 1215, which affirmed the dogma of Transubstantiation, the Council of Trent, which condemned the errors of Protestantism, and finally the Vatican Council of 1870.

If we take the earliest creed, commonly called the Apostles' Creed (about the origin of which nothing definite is known save that it was not composed by the Apostles), and compare it with the Creed of Pope Pius IVth (which is the working creed of the Roman Catholic Church of to-day and embodies the decisions of the Council of Trent),<sup>1</sup> we cannot fail to be struck with the enormous growth of dogmas or beliefs necessary to salvation. The creed of Pope Pius IV. begins with the Nicene Creed, and then follows, among

<sup>1</sup> The Apostles' Creed, and the Creed of Pius IVth are given in parallel columns in Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, pp. 20-21, 28-29, 30-31, 32-33, 54-55, 58-59, 62-63, 74-75.



other things, the Seven Sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Purgatory, Indulgences, Invocation of Saints, Veneration of relics and images. Such was the creed of the Roman Catholic Church when Newman entered it. He was not in the least appalled by the veneration of relics and images which, as a belief necessary to salvation, is surely the *reductio ad absurdum* of dogmatism.

A special theory was obviously wanted to explain this wide divergence between the New Testament or even the Apostles' Creed, and the Tridentine Decrees. It is the theory of the *Depositum Fidei*, or the *Deposit of Faith*, according to which Christ Himself confided all this mass of beliefs to His Church; some Catholic writers have gone so far as to inform us that this was done in the forty days between His Resurrection and the Ascension. The "deposit" is regarded on the one hand as something fixed. "Jesus Christ confided His doctrine to His Church that she might be its guardian and faithful interpreter, retrenching nothing from and adding nothing to it. And the Church preserves it unaltered and unalterable."<sup>1</sup> Heretics find a great difficulty here. The comparison of the Apostles' Creed with all the minute and multifarious decrees and canons of the Tridentine and Vatican Councils does not give them the idea of the unaltered and the unalterable. There is a further explanation to help them out. It is that all the dogmas were contained in the original deposit, but many were implicit; these have now become explicit. On this shewing they are "new in a way."<sup>2</sup> They are not new beliefs, but "new necessary beliefs."<sup>3</sup> There we must leave the matter, though when we contemplate this constant piling up of new necessary doctrines, this making of the way of salvation ever more complicated and more difficult, can we help being reminded of the words of Christ: "Yea they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with their finger"?

Newman was quite satisfied with the amount of dogma he obtained in 1845, but the Church of Rome was not. In 1854 came, as we have seen, the promulgation of the Immaculate Conception of

<sup>1</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course*, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 18.

the Virgin Mary as *ex fide* or a doctrine necessary to salvation. Here was a strange illustration of Newman's position that Faith is an intellectual act. The Immaculate Conception had been an idea floating in the Church for centuries. When it first became definite enough to be formidable, it was opposed by the Dominicans and supported by the Franciscans. The Dominicans were the intellectual party, they were trained theologians, and the aim of their order was the extirpation of heresy. The Franciscans were the emotional people, the popular party voicing the feelings of the "man in the street." The popular party carried the day, the heart beat the head, the heresy of one century became the orthodoxy of another, so much so that Pope Pius IXth without summoning a Council of the Church issued a Bull and the new necessary doctrine was made. Newman acquiesced without a murmur.

Then came the Vatican Council of 1870. There was much secrecy in the preliminary proceedings, but rumours got about that its object was to proclaim the Pope personally infallible. When the Council met, Manning was the foremost champion of them all, fighting openly and enthusiastically for the new necessary doctrine; Newman was its quiet but determined opponent. Manning was on the winning side; Newman and his friends were overborne. Some seceded from the Church in consequence, notably Döllinger, the most learned Catholic historian and theologian of his day, but Newman submitted. What happened twice in one man's life-time may happen again. Roman Catholics have no guarantee that dogma will remain as it is. The Pope may at any moment promulgate a new necessary doctrine, and so make the way of salvation even more complicated and more difficult than it is now.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### KNOWN BY THEIR FRUITS.

"A TREE is known by its fruits"; "wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Such is the gospel criterion, and the criterion of philosophy as well. The various forms of religion must be judged by their results, by the characters of those who profess them, and by the effect they produce upon mankind. This being so, what does history show to be the consequences of beginning from above in religion with authority, dogma and creed, or of beginning from below with experience, emotion and conduct?

As we have seen, the Catholic view, as Newman explains it, identifies religion with knowledge and faith with obedience. It runs parallel with the Platonic doctrine which identified virtue with knowledge. There is a dialogue of Plato in which the question discussed is, can virtue be taught? The answer given is that if virtue is identical with knowledge it can be taught, if it is not identical it cannot be taught. But if religion is the same thing as dogma, and the sum total of dogma is theology, and theology is the same sort of thing as astronomy or geology, then it can be taught. The schoolmasters of past days—the *Orbilii plagosi*—had a supreme belief in the efficacy of punishment as a means of education. Boys could have knowledge driven into them by the stick—at any rate to some extent. Besides, if faith is obedience, then unbelief is disobedience, and disobedience has always been considered a fit object for chastisement. The heretics "who obeyed not the truth" had to suffer accordingly. Thus all dogmatic religions are or have been persecuting religions.

There is another reason for this attitude of intolerance, and it lies in the view taken of the risks which the heretic runs. A distinguished historian thus explains it: "If men believe that their own view of a disputed question is true beyond all possibility of mistake, if they further believe that those who adopt other views

will be doomed by the Almighty to an eternity of misery which, with the same moral disposition but with a different belief, they would have escaped, these men will, sooner or later, persecute to the full extent of their power. If you speak to them of the physical and mental suffering which persecution produces, or of the sincerity and unselfish heroism of its victims, they will reply that such arguments rest altogether on the inadequacy of your realisation of the doctrine they believe. What suffering that man can inflict can be comparable to the eternal misery of all who embrace the doctrine of the heretic? . . . If you encountered a lunatic who, in his frenzy, was inflicting on multitudes around him a death of the most prolonged and excruciating agony, would you not feel justified in arresting his career by every means in your power—by taking his life if you could not otherwise attain your object? But if you knew that this man was inflicting not temporal but eternal death . . . would you not act with still less compunction or hesitation?"<sup>1</sup>

St. Thomas Aquinas was a saint, but, like many other saints, he was a persecutor. As he puts it, "If the makers of counterfeit coins or other malefactors are at once justly executed by the civil rulers, much more can heretics not only be excommunicated but be justly put to death."<sup>2</sup> So it came about that the historian can write, "that the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history."<sup>3</sup>

The ancient method of teaching is now at a discount; the criminal law has been modified, and tampering with the currency is no longer a capital offence. Is it not time there was a corresponding alteration in things sacred? For I cannot persuade myself that the Roman Catholic Church has abandoned persecution. There is that 24th article in the Syllabus, which Schrader puts thus: "The Church has the power to use external force. She has also a direct and indirect temporal power," and he adds the remark "not minds merely are subject to the power of the Church,"

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. II., pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa*, Part II., Q. xi., Art. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, Vol. II., p. 32.

meaning, I imagine, that bodies as well are so subject. And if bodies, are the bodies of heretics immune? The weapon may be laid on the shelf for the time being, but it is there and can be taken down again if circumstances permit.

Protestants for a long time showed themselves as full of the fury of persecution as the Roman Catholics. They had in the first instance only substituted one dogmatic system for another. The "Lutheran leaven" worked but slowly, but it stops persecution wherever it is properly understood. There is the story of the American father who was puzzled why his children did not love him. "I beat them often enough for not loving me," he remarked. But in spite of this instance to the contrary, it is generally agreed that though knowledge may be driven in by force, affection cannot be.

The root of persecution is the sense of infallibility. Dogmatic infallibility is one variety of it among others. The faintest breath of scepticism, the smallest suspicion that one may possibly be mistaken, and persecution becomes an impossibility. So there is a good word to be said for scepticism, at least in homœopathic quantities.

Let us turn now to the other side of the picture. Salvation by creed, as we saw, leads to intolerance and persecution. Salvation by conduct, if we may so call it for brevity's sake, or the Changed Life which was the primitive basis of the Church, bears as its fruits conciliation and peace. There is of course this aspect of religion to be found in Roman Catholicism. Newman can insist on it with all his customary eloquence. Here is a significant passage: "I am not speaking now of belief in the great objects of faith, but I am contemplating Catholicism chiefly as a system of pastoral instruction and moral duty; and I have to do with its doctrines mainly as they are subservient to its direction of the conscience and the conduct. I speak of it, for instance, as teaching the ruined state of man; his utter inability to gain Heaven by anything he can do himself; the moral certainty of his losing his soul if left to himself; the simple absence of all rights and claims on the part of the creature in the presence of the Creator; the illimitable claims of the Creator on the service of the creature; the imperative and obligatory force of the voice of conscience, and the inconceivable evil of sensuality.



I speak of it as teaching, that no one gains Heaven except by the free grace of God, or without a regeneration of nature; that no one can please Him without faith; that the heart is the seat both of sin and obedience; that charity is the fulfilling of the Law."<sup>1</sup>

Or take another passage in the *Apologia*.<sup>2</sup> Newman says of St. Alfonso Liguori's sermons which Dr. Russell, the President of Maynooth gave him, "There is much of what would be called legendary illustration, but the substance of them is plain, practical, awful preaching upon the great truths of salvation. What I can speak of with greater confidence is the effect produced on me a little later by studying the Exercises of St. Ignatius. For here again, in a matter consisting in the purest and most direct acts of religion—in the intercourse between God and the soul, during a season of recollection, of repentance, of good resolution, of inquiry into vocation—the soul was 'sola cum solo'; there was no cloud interposed between the creature and the object of his faith and love. The command practically enforced was 'My son, give Me thine heart.'" Here again, by the way, we find ourselves wondering that Newman could ever have said he had no idea of religion except dogma.

There is not a word in these extracts which is not as Protestant as it is Catholic. Is it too much to say that the "Lutheran heaven" can be discerned in them both? The text, "My son, give Me thine heart," makes the affections the seat of religion as the Bible everywhere does. "The purest and most direct acts of religion—the intercourse between God and the soul, have they nothing about them of "inward persuasions and consolations"; and if a hostile critic had dismissed them as "pleasurable sensations and sublime fancies" would Newman have had nothing to say to him in the way of opposition? When we are told that "the heart is the seat both of sin and of obedience (the heart, be it observed, and not the will or the intellect), and that love is the fulfilling of the Law," is there nothing here which can be called "a feeling, an emotion, an affection, an appetency"? Obviously there are all these things, and let us rejoice in the fact, because they constitute common ground where all Christians can meet and be at one. Humility, repentance, faith, hope and love are feelings, springing from the heart. They are the

<sup>1</sup> *Idea of a University*, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 195-6.

elements of all true religion, and what amount of assent to intellectual propositions can ever outweigh them, or deserve to be preferred before them? They are not in the creeds, and cannot be, because they are the greatest things in the world and surpass knowledge. The VIIIth Article of the Church of England says, "Now abideth three Creeds." St. Paul says, "Now abideth three things, faith, hope, love, and the greatest of these is love"—(a feeling, an emotion, an affection, an appetency). He says too, "If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have not love, I am nothing." We may have all knowledge, perform all the intellectual acts the Church demands, hold all the creeds, all the mysteries, but if we have not love, we are nothing. Is not St. Paul here at the heart of the matter, and is it not better to be wrong with him than right with the Roman Catholic Church?

Here I may be permitted to digress and interpolate some personal matters. When I first read the *Apologia* many years ago, the extract quoted on p. 91 was the thing in the whole book which most impressed me, and remained firmly fixed in my mind. Some while ago I saw it quoted in the *Hibbert Journal*, and it so happened that a Sunday or two after, I was away from home, and went to hear a celebrated Free Church preacher. He was delivering a course of sermons on the essential differences between Protestantism and Catholicism, and the essential difference treated of that Sunday morning was this very doctrine of *solus cum solo*. It was the unique glory of Protestantism, the preacher said, that it allowed "no image of any sort, material or immaterial, no dogmatic symbol, no rite, no sacrament, to come between the soul and its Creator." What he supposed to be a sign of separation was in reality a bond of unity.

It may be asked, What is the reason of all these contradictions in Roman Catholicism? Why does it thus austere insist on dogma, the reception of a creed, and membership of a visible organisation, and at the same time make the strongest appeals to the emotions and cultivate them with an intensity which no other religion can equal? The reason is to be found in its extraordinary composite character; the most opposite and conflicting elements go to make it up. These represent what the Church in the course of its develop-

ment borrowed from the environments by which it found itself successively surrounded. We may put this experience in a crudely dramatic form.

We may imagine the Jews coming along first and asking for admission. "We have a priesthood," they said, "to which we cling, and a doctrine of salvation by merit, and other ideas which the Founder of your Church and St. Paul, to speak of none else, did not seem altogether to agree with." "Never mind," said the Church, "Come inside."

Then the Greeks came along. "We have a philosophy," they said, "which may prove useful, especially that of one Aristotle; it may help in the definition of your central mystery. We have other philosophical doctrines, such as that of the natural immortality of the soul that is not in your Scripture, and these said Scriptures speak somewhat slightly of our favourite studies." "Come in," said the Church.

Then the Romans came. "We have ideas about law," said they, "which may help you in your doctrine of forgiveness, and four cardinal virtues which are quite different from your three theological virtues, and a doctrine of universal dominion which may turn out to be acceptable to you." "Come in by all means," said the Church, "you are most welcome."

Then the heathen came and they said, "We have certain rites and ceremonies which we should like to retain, and certain deities great and small whom we love, and certain practices in daily life which we would fain be allowed still to follow, but of which you may not altogether approve." The Church pondered awhile. Then she said, "As to rites and ceremonies and seasons they are innocent enough, and we can accommodate you. The question of deities great and small is more serious. But you may have the Queen of Heaven and the Saints, and your real worship may be paid to them, but you must never say so. In word at least the supreme worship must be God alone. More serious still is the question of your conduct. But we will meet you as far as we can. We will divide sins into those which matter and those which do not matter. And as for the sins which matter, we shall exact special payment in this life, and if that be not enough, there must be deferred payments in

the life to come." And the heathen thought this was fair and reasonable, so they came in.

This little parable may be drawn in crude outline with no light and shade, but has it not in it much indisputable fact? What is the Roman Catholic Church but a mixture, more or less mechanical, of Judaism, Greek Philosophy, Roman Law and Morals, Roman Imperialism, Eastern Asceticism, Pagan Magic and Superstition, with primitive Christianity at the bottom of it all? It is primitive Christianity which still *agitat. molem* and preserves and vivifies the whole.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### PEACE PROPOSALS.

THE present condition of the world ought to be a cause of profound humiliation to the Christian Churches, but it is not. After nineteen hundred years of effort they have proved utterly unable to stop a war which directly involved every continent of the globe except South America. Not only have the Churches failed to prevent war, but their influence has not been sufficient to preserve those modifications of its rigours and cruelties which past ages had effected. Treaties have been broken, and every conceivable barbarity has been committed. Why has there been this relapse into barbarism? May not one cause be that Christianity is, and has been for many centuries, a house divided against itself. It could not speak about the war with a united voice, and so it never spoke at all. Must the present divisions go on for ever; is there no hope of better things? The hope is faint, but such as it is it must be cherished, and the reasons for it examined.

In the last chapter we discovered certain common ground on which religious persons can stand side by side; let us see if this ground cannot be extended. Take the final basis of Catholicism—membership of the one and only Church which involves the doctrine of exclusive salvation, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. There are signs that this rigorous view is not standing the test of time. Newman himself can be called as a witness, though he seems never to have noticed the significance of his own testimony. The words at the beginning of the *Apologia* have already been quoted, “the inward conversion . . . of which I still am more certain than that I have hands and feet.”<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to remember that Newman had this experience in a Church which he afterwards came to regard as both heretical and schismatic, and that when he had become a member of the Church of Rome he still was more certain that he

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 4.



had been converted while a member of the Church of England than that he had hands or feet. That is a startling admission. It means that conversion is independent of Church membership, and is not invalidated by either heresy or schism. Newman thus is capable of adopting on occasion not only the Protestant view of faith, but also the Protestant doctrine of the Church. This doctrine is that the Church consists of all those who have a certain religious experience and act thereon. As is said by the writer of the 2d Epistle to Timothy<sup>1</sup> (ii. 19), "the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His" (that is the divine side of the matter); "and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (that is the human and practical side of the matter). The Church is at once visible and invisible. It is visible because it consists of men and women alive and in the flesh; it is invisible because not all who outwardly belong to it are in reality members of it; but God who judges the heart knows who are His, and we may count as His all who are zealous to depart from iniquity.

Father Hugh Benson may be cited as another witness on the same side. He writes of the missions he and his Mirfield brethren held, "We saw conversions everywhere; we saw sinners changed by the power of God, children enkindled and taught, the lukewarm set on fire, and the obstinate broken down. It was impossible to doubt that the grace of God was at work here."<sup>2</sup> As to the Catholic view of what is here asserted, the same author says, "The Catholic Church has never asked me to repudiate anything on the subject or to assert anything so entirely blasphemous and absurd as that which Anglicans occasionally pretend of her—namely, the diabolical or even illusive nature of the grace that God bestows on those who are in good faith. In my confessions in the Church of England I, at any rate, made acts of contrition and did my best to comply with the Sacrament of Penance; in my communions I lifted up my heart toward the Bread of Life; and, therefore, our Lord could not be the

<sup>1</sup> The writer is here discussing a question of heresy, that of Hymenæus and Philetus, who said that the resurrection was past already, and the doctrine of the Church arises incidentally thereon.

<sup>2</sup> *Confessions*, p. 68.

rewarder of those who seek Him if He had not visited me in response.”<sup>1</sup> The Salvation Army can record conversions more numerous than those of Mirfield, and spiritual experiences as real as any which Father Benson had the happiness to enjoy, and it has neither sacraments nor Church organisation. The grace of God takes a wider range than St. Augustine either thought or taught.

An earlier basis of union, as we saw, was a definite belief—orthodoxy in short. But neither does this conception work quite satisfactorily in practice. There are the little children, for instance, of whom Christ said quite simply and without reservation, “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” What have they to do with “the Sacred Canons of the Holy Council of Trent and the Œcumenical Vatican Council?”<sup>2</sup> These complicated propositions are quite beyond their grasp, as they are beyond the grasp of the vast majority of adults, or, if it comes to that, beyond anybody’s grasp.

This difficulty is obvious, and the Roman Catholic Church has had to do something to meet it. It therefore distinguishes between an *implicit* faith and an *explicit* faith. “Faith is *implicit* when we believe in a general manner the truths which are unknown to us in particular, and *explicit* when the truths which we believe are distinctly known to us.”<sup>3</sup> Then the further question arises, What truths are the subjects of implicit and explicit faith respectively? The writer we are quoting says: “The faithful are not obliged to *know* all the truths of faith. It is enough that they believe generally, by an act of *implicit* faith, all that God has revealed to His Church. There are, however, certain truths which must be believed with an *explicit* faith, and which the faithful are consequently obliged to know in particular. . . . These latter are the four following: the existence of God, the remunerative and avenging justice of God, the Blessed Trinity, and the Incarnation of God the Son.” We must add that a solidly probable opinion holds that explicit faith in the last two points is not absolutely necessary. Thus the creed of Pius IVth and the Canons of Trent and Vatican sink at last to very modest proportions<sup>4</sup>—that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that seek after Him.

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course*, p. 239.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 241.

This same author also says : "Though faith is a sure light which expels all error from our intelligence, it does not at the same time chase away all darkness; for though faith makes us certain of truth, it does not show us the truth itself, but only shows it *in a witness*. This is why it is compared to a mirror, which shows an object in an unmistakable manner, but only indirectly and by reflection. It is also sometimes represented as a veil, which, whilst it covers a person, allows us to see that person, though in an imperfect manner."<sup>1</sup> When we finish up with the word "imperfect," infallibility seems itself to be taking the veil and fading away from our sight.

The last sentence may have been forced beyond what it can fairly be made to bear, but at any rate it will enable us to understand how the Church has come to have a milder view of heresy than at one time seemed possible. The fruit of this mildness is seen in the doctrine of "invincible ignorance." "For it is to be held of faith that no one can be saved outside the Apostolic Roman Church, which is the only ark of salvation; nevertheless it must equally be held that he who is in ignorance of the true religion, if this is invincible, is therefore in no way culpable in the sight of God. Now who shall think himself sufficient to be able to set limits to this sort of ignorance, bearing in mind the manner and variety of peoples, places, talents and of all other circumstances whatsoever?"<sup>2</sup> One gladly recognises the generosity of this utterance.

The same spirit of comprehension may be seen in the distinction drawn between the body and the soul of the Church. "It is important that this formula, 'Out of the Church there is no salvation,' should be taken in its true sense. It by no means signifies that *whoever is not a Catholic will be damned* . . . no man can be saved if, by his own will he does not belong either to the body *or the soul of the Church*. . . . Those who belong only to the *soul* of the Church are those heretics who are in good faith observing the law of God as far as they know it. Even a pagan may belong to the Church; for as long as he keeps the natural law, the providence and grace of God will not be wanting to him."<sup>3</sup> As for invincible ignorance,

<sup>1</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> Allocution of Pope Pius IX., Dec. 9, 1854 (quoted in Coxon, *Roman Catholicism*, p. 93).

<sup>3</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course*, pp. 70-71.

some of its victims, perhaps, suffer from knowing too much rather than too little, but we will not be critical; instead let us thankfully note any relaxation which the Church makes in our favour.

Is then the unity of Christendom feasible? Are the indications given above of a modified temper sufficient to justify us in not dismissing it at once as an impracticable dream? Just before the war broke out proposals for the reunion of the Christian Churches originated in the United States and were beginning to attract attention. Since the war people's thoughts have been otherwise occupied, but the idea is not dead; it is only sleeping, and one day will awaken from its sleep. The preliminary Conference on Faith and Order held at Geneva in 1920 is a welcome sign of this awakening.

If the question is regarded in its broadest aspect, all Christians are one. In the foregoing pages some severe things have been said about the Roman Catholic Church, yet at bottom I feel I am on the Pope's side, as are all those who believe that in Jesus Christ we have the revelation of God. The quarrel between Catholic and Protestant is, after all, a domestic quarrel, and that is perhaps the reason why it has been so bitter and so prolonged. One step towards a better state of things may be a frank statement of differences and difficulties on the one side, and a recognition on the other side that the differences and difficulties are at least sincere.

The obstacles, however, in the way of reunion are enormous; they are so great that they cannot well be exaggerated. Protestant unity is easier by comparison, but the unity of Christendom with the Church of Rome left out is like Hamlet with the part of the Prince of Denmark omitted. Rome has her own terms of peace; they can be summed up in two words—unconditional surrender. So speedily do we reach a deadlock. Protestants see no hope of union on a dogmatic basis. History shows that dogma divides, while it is conduct which draws men together. When the Christian Church rested on a changed life as its foundation, the heathen world said, "See how these Christians love one another." When dogma became the foundation, and furious quarrellings and persecution broke out in consequence, the same heathen remarked that



"there are no wild beasts so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith."<sup>1</sup>

Obviously the doctrine of infallibility is a stumbling-block. The great drawback of infallibility is that even if you make a mistake you can never admit it, though the mistake may be obvious to yourself, and still more so to those around you. Infallibility might possibly use the method of fictions, well-known to and much beloved by lawyers, where a law is altered and the pretence is maintained that it remains unaltered. But there is a natural moral objection to fictions.

Still the Church of Rome has done wonders with her theories of invincible ignorance, and the soul of the Church. Is any further progress on these lines possible? May the victims of invincible ignorance have frankly accorded to them the right to grow up and think for themselves? They need not then concern themselves with the domestic discipline of Roman Catholicism.

But conduct still seems to hold out the fairest prospect of a gradual approximation. Now and again Catholics and Protestants join together in good works and learn to know something of one another; but, speaking broadly, they dwell apart in isolation and mutual estrangement. Could they not begin by co-operating more cordially in the humanitarian enterprises which are still one of the chief glories of our day? Union in the service of man might lead on to closer union in the inner and spiritual life where Catholicism is so extraordinarily rich. So in process of time there might be informal federation though no organic unity, and an increasing oneness of spirit in spite of outward separation. But for these things Christians must go back to the beginning and learn once more to love one another.

Even Protestant unity has its own special difficulties. What does Protestantism believe to be the fundamental thing in religion? For if there is to be union there must be a basis of union. Is it orthodoxy, or is it goodness? The kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, or the three Creeds of the Eighth Article of the Church of England? Is not Protestantism at this moment halting between two opinions? Dare it go wholly back to Christ's Christianity?

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, Vol. II., p. 31.



From this point of view there appears once again a gleam of hope with regard to the Roman Catholic Church. It has been pointed out that Rome, much as she talks about authority, infallibility and dogma, yet recognises the supreme importance of goodness. A word from the Vatican and every Roman Catholic sermon would be laying the emphasis on goodness, and by none would the sermons be more appreciated than by Protestants. Again I ask, cannot Protestants and Catholics forget the past and begin co-operating in a practical manner to spread the Kingdom of God on earth?

This plea for a change of emphasis in the Church is parallel to the plea previously made for a change of emphasis in the State. In the State private enterprise at present reigns supreme, and its ill effects are tempered by mutual helpfulness. Mutual helpfulness should reign supreme, and be modified and inspired by individual initiative. So in the Church Goodness should be the aim, while the feelings on which it is founded should not refuse the guidance of Reason even in its ultimate form of dogmatic teaching. But Dogmatism must not be made the sole form in which Religion can appear, nor even be accounted the better part of Religion.

## CHAPTER XX.

### PERSONAL INFALLIBILITY.

THE two infallibilities, the Bible and the Church, accepted till the dawn of the 16th century, have since then suffered severely at the hands of criticism, though both survive. What are we to say to the third authority, we have come across—the inward light? Can we look within, and so attain to certainty?

To begin with, it is clear that there is a sense in which we all postulate our own infallibility, if we choose to use that name. Mr. Bertrand Russell, for instance, speaks of “the possibility of distinguishing certain truths as *self-evident* in a sense which ensures infallibility.”<sup>1</sup> There is also a more popular sense of the term. When once we are convinced of a thing we are also convinced of our own infallibility in thinking as we do. When I say “it must be so,” I say at the same time “I am right in thinking so,” and I say also “everybody is wrong who does not think the same”; so that when an antagonist, who is more discourteous than intelligent, retorts on me, “Of course you think yourself right and everybody else wrong,” he is only charging me with doing what he does himself, and all the world does as well. We may take it then that there is a personal infallibility, limited it may be, but none the less real.

This form of certainty, as it seems better to call it, is most clearly seen in connexion with those conclusions of the mind to which reference was made in the previous volume.<sup>2</sup> It is the other side of our intuitive and instinctive judgments, and of those logical proofs which amount to demonstration. Suppose that I am entirely ignorant of geometry; I open my Euclid and there find it laid down that “two straight lines cannot enclose a space.” I see two imaginary straight lines, and I see simultaneously the unenclosed gap

<sup>1</sup> *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> *The Manuscripts of God*, chap. VIII.

between them. Having once come to this conclusion, I can never come to any other; I feel that I am infallibly right in thinking as I do.

Then there are the ultimate moral judgments or intuitions. Such is the example previously given that courage is better than cowardice, which is only a particular form of the general proposition that right is better than wrong. Nothing can ever induce me not to rate a coward lower in the moral scale than a brave man. We all feel ourselves infallibly right in preferring the brave man to the coward. We also know of a certainty that right is better than wrong.

How far will these intuitive certainties of head and heart carry us in the matter of religion? Let us take once more the three fundamental factors—God, the soul, and immortality. Of the existence of God I have already spoken.<sup>1</sup> To me this is an intuitive certainty. The difficulty, as we saw, was in the things outside ourselves, rather than in the intuition itself. God may exist, and be all-powerful, but in view of the evil in the world is He all-good? Has my intuitive certainty ever risen to that height? Here let each man speak for himself. For myself I can only say that it has been my lot on one or two occasions to experience a sudden uplifting of the soul, in which it was irresistibly borne in upon me that all was well with the world. The experiences came quite unexpectedly, and were only momentary, vanishing as quickly almost as they came, but they brought with them an extraordinary sense of reality and assurance. Others may not have had this particular form of intuition, though I have come across cases similar to my own. But this is an instance of private intuition. My private intuitions may suffice for me, but how about those other people whose experience (or want of experience) is different?

The existence of the soul is also to me a fact of self-consciousness. Ingenious people try to argue me out of my belief, saying that my consciousness deceives me on this point, and that what I instinctively feel can be explained in another way, but I remain of the same opinion. The existence of an "I," of an inward personality, is to me as real as the existence of the external universe.

Then a difficulty arises parallel to the difficulty about the existence of God. I may have a soul, but is that soul going to live for

<sup>1</sup> *The Manuscripts of God*, chap. XX.

ever? Do my intuitions assure me of immortality, or even of a continuance of life after death? Frankly, they do not, though some men have asserted that they are in happier case than I am; but here again the inner light shines for the possessor of it and for him alone.

The force of the argument from intuition is of course increased if the intuition is general. The very widespread belief in the existence of some form of deity is one of the arguments in what is called natural theology for the truth of that belief. It is asserted that there is no people or tribe so low in the scale as not to have some idea of God. If instances to the contrary are brought forward, it may be replied that the individuals in question have not yet reached that stage of evolution at which the conception of God occurs, but that in due course they will reach it. Still even the most general intuitions, though an admirable groundwork, can scarcely be reckoned the complete superstructure as well. After all, the most conspicuous feature about us is not our infallibility, but our fallibility, our ignorance and proneness to err.

"Knowledge," to quote Mr. Bertrand Russell again, "is a form of union of self and not-self." There is that vast outer not-self, the universe in which we live. It contains an infinite number of facts, only an infinitesimal portion of which we can know for ourselves, and then comes the stupendous task of drawing correct inferences from these facts. Is it not asking too much of frail human nature to play the part both of self and not-self, to provide the subject-matter as well as to pass judgment on it, to be at once the source of revelation, and the appraiser of its value? Certain criteria of truth we may possess, and certain truths may come to us from within, but the great bulk of the facts lies without. There must be the union of the inward and the outward, the question and the answer, the need and the satisfaction.

Infallibility in the wider sense thus eludes us, and it begins to dawn on us that it must be an attribute of God alone. God is "the blessed and only Potentate, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable." Infallibility is but another side of omniscience, the "unapproachable light." Reasonable certainty we may attain to, enough to enable us to make the venture of faith that right is better and stronger than wrong, and to frame

our whole life on this belief; but infallibility, who can in our present condition give us that? To demand it is to claim to walk by sight and not by faith.

For all this the human heart is always clamouring for more certainty, for more assurance. Infallibility has been claimed, as we have incidentally seen, for revelation, whether through organisation, book or individual soul. Infallibility not having proved a very helpful word, will this other word revelation serve us better?



## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE STUMBLING-STONE OF REVELATION.

INFALLIBILITY is a word which the speech of everyday life knows not, save to deny its existence, witness the Cambridge dictum "We are none of us infallible, not even the youngest of us." Revelation, on the other hand, is a term of frequent occurrence, both in ordinary conversation and in books. When I had written this last sentence I tried to remember an instance of its use, but could not, so I resolved to make a note of the first case I came across. Here it is. It comes from Renan's *Vie de Jesus*, where the author describes his feeling when living in Palestine and writing his book. "All this history which at a distance seemed to float in the clouds of an unreal world, now took a body and a solidity which astonished me. The striking agreement of the text and the places, the marvellous harmony of the evangelical ideal with the country which served as a frame to the picture, were to me like a revelation."<sup>1</sup> The phrase "like a revelation" suggests that Renan had in his mind the theological sense of the word—information given by supernatural means. The ordinary use does not go as far as that. It implies only new and striking information or discovery. Thus, for instance, we may have heard it said that the Venus of Milo is a revelation of beauty, or that some laborious work of scholarship is a revelation of what patience and the disinterested love of knowledge can accomplish, or that an heroic deed of bravery and self-sacrifice is a revelation of the moral possibilities of human nature. Here are revelations in the regions of beauty, truth and goodness. The dictionaries recognise this use of the term when they define revelation as "the disclosing or discovering to others of what was before unknown to them."

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Hutton, *Essays*, Vol. I., p. 265.

This idea of the disclosure or discovery of what was before unknown is obviously of very wide application. The scientists have classified man as *homo sapiens*, but there has been a time in his history when he must be described by another adjective *homo alalus*, dumb man, before he had attained the gift of speech, when his wisdom was at zero. In contrast with this lowly condition think of the vast sum of human knowledge at the present day, of all that man has discovered, or in other words, of all that has been unveiled or revealed to him. How has this mighty advance come about? Like everything else, by evolution, by the action of the environment on the organism. There was in the organism something capable of being worked on, and the environment was capable of working on it; from the interaction of the two the whole of human knowledge has come. The actual process has been the same as in other departments of evolution; it assumes a double form, one catastrophic, sudden striking; the other uniformitarian, gradual, constant.

The adjectives catastrophic and "uniformitarian" are borrowed from the two rival schools of geology in bygone days. The one school fixed its attention on the mighty deeds of Nature—volcanic outbursts, the upheaval of mountain-chains, the depression of ocean beds; the other laid stress on the slow and steady action of every-day forces—the wearing away of rocks by the flow of water, the growth of deposits, the disintegrating effect of rain and snow, of frost and heat. There is the same contrast in modern thought about evolution. Hitherto the emphasis has been on the slow accumulation of minute differences; now we are beginning to hear more of sudden upward rushes; mutations are set over against variations. The catastrophists and the uniformitarians have long since buried the hatchet and coalesced as geologists pure and simple. The same thing may happen with the evolutionists. There is good reason, then, why we should hold to both conceptions.

Let us take an example of the first kind of revelation. Sometimes a man thinks of a thing which no one has ever thought of before; and then humanity makes a distinct step in advance. How does this notable result come about? When I was writing my

*History of University Reform*, I had occasion to consult a book entitled *Essays on the Endowment of Research*. The last essay was by Dr. Sorby, a great discoverer in his day, and was called "Unencumbered Research: a personal experience." The gist of his argument was that to make discoveries you must have a mind at rest, and that nothing contributes so much to rest and peace of mind as a good balance at the bank. But what interested me most was the writer's description of how he thought of things he had never thought of before. Here it is. "For some time I had been occupied with the study of the microscopical structure of rocks possessing slaty cleavage, a problem which had previously attracted much attention, but was still involved in so much obscurity that several theories, all equally unsatisfactory, had been propounded. The more I studied the microscopical structure of these cleaved rocks, the more I was puzzled with the observed facts. One day when quietly walking in my garden reflecting on things in general, the simplest possible explanation of the whole flashed across my mind. I immediately went into my workroom, mixed some small pieces of coloured paper with wet pipe-clay, and on compressing them in the manner that slate rocks are proved to have been compressed, I found that I obtained a very good representation of the characteristic structure on which their cleavage depends. . . . In a few years I had the satisfaction of finding that it was universally adopted as a perfectly satisfactory explanation of one of the great phenomena of geology."

Dr. Sorby tackled other geological problems. In the second case he writes, "All at once the correct explanation flashed on me." In the third, "For a long time this circumstance remained a puzzle; but in walking out in the country one summer evening, some trivial circumstance long since forgotten led me to perceive, &c." And again, "One day, however, whilst rambling over the quiet hills of Derbyshire, it occurred to me, apparently quite accidentally."

Can any explanation be given of this repeated experience? Light seems to be thrown on it by the theory of the sub-conscious self. On this supposition Dr. Sorby, in puzzling over the problem of slaty cleavage, had exhausted his conscious self and come to the

end of its tether. Then his sub-conscious self went on thinking, and got at the right result, which suddenly rushed up into the conscious self. That we should be able to think without knowing it is certainly a very astonishing proposition, but, pending the results of further investigation, the above explanation must be regarded as holding the field.

This sub-conscious mind can perhaps best be studied in the case of a child. If you watch a child you see that its mind grows, you know not how, before it has speech, and before it goes to school and has lessons. It is continually making fresh discoveries, and thinking of things it never thought of before. Take the attainment of self-consciousness, for example. Some children say, "I" at a very early age; on the other hand some children speak of themselves in the third person until a comparatively advanced date, but sooner or later all sane children speak of themselves in the first person. It is no use trying to accelerate the process; it would be worse than foolish when a young child says "he" instead of "I," to shake it, and telling it, "you are you, not he." The discovery must come of itself, and does come, if we are patient. The child has learned, not consciously through a teacher, but silently through the action of the environment upon it. The kingdom of knowledge has its own way of coming without observation. So mankind goes on thinking of things it never thought of before; in some instances the thought is really new, a genuine discovery, a revelation to all who will receive it; in other cases we think of things which innumerable other persons have thought of before, but which we in our turn must each think of for ourselves.

There seems to be an analogy here between body and mind. The body has a naked side in which its five senses are situate, and through these it receives impressions from the visible universe; the mind also seems to have a naked side, and through it receives impressions from the unseen world of thought. The sub-conscious self thus lies between this unseen world without, and the inward conscious self, and appears to have a life and thoughts of its own. Who will set a limit to what these thoughts may be?

The ordinary way by which we come to think of things we never thought of before is by getting somebody else to tell us—a



process carried on through the conscious self, which we dignify by the name of education. Education clearly falls within our definition. It too is revelation, or the discovery to us of things we did not know before. What does our own experience teach us on this point? We recall, perhaps, a youthful puzzling over some difficult sum or piece of translation; we abandoned the solution or the sense as hopeless; then our teacher came along,—a few words of explanation from him, the light dawned, and all was clear. He was to us an educator, nay more, a revealer. Education is from this point of view a labour-saving device. It takes too long to find out everything for oneself from the beginning, even if one has the capacity. Pascal is said to have discovered at a very early age several propositions in geometry by his own unaided efforts. Most of us would produce a very small book if it contained nothing but a geometry which was all our own; so we go to our teachers and ask them to initiate us into the vast stores of already discovered mysteries. Yet the good teacher always tries to make his pupils think and find out things for themselves. In my school-edition of Euclid after the book-work, there were “riders,” on which I used to break my teeth in the vain endeavour to apply and extend my geometrical knowledge. There are many other applications of the same principle beside “riders.” The “heuristic method,” as it is called, can never go permanently out of fashion.

The same phenomena are apparent in the sphere of goodness as in the sphere of truth. Here also the gradual working of the subconscious forces has its place. Take that mysterious thing we call influence. We have a friend and circumstances take him away from us; we see him after a time and exclaim how altered he is. “He has been under other influences” we say. There is the naked side to his soul also, and through it subtle forces have been streaming; their exits and their entrances are alike unnoticed; but they leave their mark for good or bad. Sometimes we pay tribute to the subtlety of these forces by not attempting to name them. We say quite generally, “he has learned by experience,” or “his character is mellowing with advancing years.”

Professor William James attributes what is known in the religious life as sudden conversion to the subconscious or subliminal



self, or, as he puts it, "in the recipient of the more instantaneous grace we have one of those subjects who are in possession of a large region in which mental work can go on subliminally, and from which invasive experiences, abruptly upsetting the equilibrium of the primary consciousness, may come."<sup>1</sup> He adds a little later on,<sup>2</sup> "Just as our primary wideawake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them. The hubbub of the waking life might close a door which in the dreamy Subliminal might remain ajar or open." Sudden conversions to a new life thus resemble the sudden awakening to or discovery of new truth.

This is a dim and twilight region, but it is lit up by a mass of experience. We have spoken of good forces; there are also evil forces. Take what is known as temptation. On one or two occasions in my life I have come suddenly and unexpectedly on situations where wrongdoing was at first sight both advantageous and easy. It was a unique opportunity, and with it there came something which felt almost like a physical thrust-forward by an invisible hand. No doubt most of our temptations are like those described by St. James when he says, "each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed," but there are instances of the seemingly external kind as well.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell on the conscious side of moral and spiritual discovery. Men can have new religious truth revealed to them by education. As the prophet said of old, "Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? Men that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. For it is precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little."

Thus there are the same two things of high importance for the life of the soul as there are for the life of the mind, discovery and education. As intellect and emotion both have their parts to play in religion, there have been new visions of truth, and side by side,

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 242.

or united with them, new experiences of the divine. This is the sudden or catastrophic side, as we have termed it, of religion. As the education of a child focuses and reproduces in miniature the education of the race, so also is it in religion. There is the slow and painful side of the process whereby, through the gradual accumulation of improvements, the most exalted conceptions have been attained to. This is the gradual or uniformitarian side of revelation. These conceptions are now ready to hand for all who care to have them; they have become matter of education, and here we see education holding out a hand to authority.

The two contrasted processes are more nearly related than appears at first sight. On the front of one of our Cambridge science buildings there is an inscription in French which may be freely translated as follows: "In the kingdom of science the good fortune of original discovery comes only to minds which have been long and carefully trained beforehand." The truth of this maxim is seen in Dr. Sorby's case. His sub-conscious mind apparently could not come to the rescue until his conscious mind had played its part and done all it could. There is more too in the work of discovery than the success of the discoverer himself. Other men labour and he enters into the fruit of their labours. Those who have gone before him provided the environment without which his particular inquiry would have been impossible. Every discovery comes in its own "fulness of time."

In the kingdom of religion (or of heaven) insight and certainty come only to those who have the preparation of the heart. So may our Cambridge maxim be paraphrased. It should be no obstacle to the reception of this truth that it is the teaching of Scripture as well as the verdict of experience. "Light is sown for the righteous," says the Psalmist. The intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual are on all fours with one another. As we have put it before, sensuous things are sensuously perceived, intellectual things are intellectually perceived, spiritual things are spiritually perceived. If a man is to perceive spiritual things he must be spiritually minded. He must have the single eye, and diligence in using it. But the sight cannot be pure unless the soul is pure. Spiritual illumination and inward purity go together. Diligence is

essential to the grasp of a subject, and comprehension of it; progress in it can only come by application. If we would appreciate beauty, we must study beautiful objects. If we would be learned, we must seek first the kingdom of learning; if we would know about virtue, we must, before all things, practice it; if we would penetrate into the secret of religion, we must seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness. Right creed will spring out of right conduct.

It is with regret that one notices here a seeming divergence from the Roman Catholic point of view. I remember once meeting a friend, an earnest and thoughtful man, in a state of great dejection. He was fresh from a conversation with a High Church clergyman who had been instructing him in the Catholic faith. In so doing the clergyman had used words to this effect: "If I go to the altar reeking from a bed of adultery, the blessing to the communicants in the Holy Eucharist is just the same as if I went there in a state of virgin purity." My friend was not familiar with this doctrine and was naturally startled by it, but a moment's reflection will show that it is a necessary consequence of the premises started from. If there are only certain channels of divine grace, and these channels are in the hands of and under the control of a sacerdotal class, it would obviously be disastrous for the laity if the flow of grace through the channels depended on the cleanness of the hands which hold them; the grace must flow whether the hands be clean or dirty. The character of the priest does not come into the question at all.

Infallibility in doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church exists and works under precisely similar conditions. An Alexander Borgia or a Leo X. is just as capable of being a channel of divine truth as the greatest saint who has ever sat in the Papal chair. Nor is the corruption of the Church any barrier to her complete doctrinal infallibility. "The great spiritual blunder," says a modern writer, "of the Infallibilist view of Revelation lies in the assumption that there *can* be infallible teaching at all except by a Being as incapable of living a false life as of pronouncing a false proposition. . . . I do not believe that such a thing as merely intellectual infallibility as to spiritual truths is conceivable at all. Say, for instance, that

the Church teaches that of 'faith, hope and charity,' the greatest is charity; but that, while she teaches this, her moral and spiritual policy and practice are of a kind to give the world which she teaches a most perverted and false view of the true nature of charity. Can then hers be 'infallible' teaching in any sense at all? . . . The only use of an infallible teacher of revealed truth would be to keep the true meaning of that revealed truth constantly before the minds of men. But for this purpose a teacher must not only use correct words, but use them with the tone, and illustrate them by the action, which really carries their deeper meaning into the minds of the taught. A Church which repeats our Lord's language concerning the proposal to destroy the Samaritan village by fire, but gives it a totally different significance by her example, is so far from teaching men infallibly, that she distinctly and positively leads them astray."<sup>1</sup>

So far we have spoken of intellectual revelation—revelation of truth through the natural working of the mind. Beauty and goodness have another method of revelation which is all their own—that of simple existence. If the Venus of Milo is a revelation of beauty, it is so just by being what it is. In like manner good people are a revelation of goodness, not only by what they say and do, but by what they are. Who has not felt thus about some pure simple soul? What he says may not be of much account intellectually, his sphere of action may be so narrow that he cannot do anything great; what he is we instinctively feel to be more than what he either says or does.

To go back to our parallelism. In the world of religion we can trace the twin forces of discovery and education. The scientific discoverer must have genius (which is insight), previous preparation and a suitable environment. The religious discoverer must in like manner have religious insight, the preparation of the heart, and also the suitable environment. These conditions were most completely fulfilled in the case of the Psalmists and Prophets of Israel. Their vision and the record of their experiences are still of undiminished value.

The teachers will always outnumber the discoverers, but both

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, *Essays*, Vol. I., pp. xi.-xiii.



are indispensable. The teachers assimilate the results attained by the discoverers and pass them on to others, with some little additions, if possible, of their own. Religion, being a practical thing, is mainly taught by example. Preaching is easy enough, it is practising which is the difficulty. As Chaucer says of his "Poore Parson":

" This noble ensample to his sheep he gaf  
That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught, . .  
For Christe's love, and His apostles twelve  
He taught, and first he followed it himselfe."

Discoverers and teachers of all kinds carry a natural authority with them which, in the long run, becomes apportioned to their merits. Even the Cambridge Heretics do not disdain to speak of one man as an authority on Greek vases, of a second as an authority on Ancient Church music, of a third as an authority in some branch of philosophy or natural science, and so on.

For the example of moral and religious teachers to shine forth in all its power and so to win all the authority which is its due, a special atmosphere is necessary. There must be affection between the pupils and the teacher. In the presence of the contemptuous, the cynical, the censorious, we are all either defiant or silent; in neither case do we show to advantage. In sympathetic surroundings, in the presence of the considerate and the open-minded, we expand and are at our best. What is true of ordinary and commonplace people, is true also of the exceptional. If we do not believe in them they cannot do any mighty works for us.

It will thus be seen how individualistic our conception of religion continues to be. Revelation and authority are personal products. As intellect and emotion are both concerned in religion, there have been new visions of truth, and side by side with them new experiences of the divine. As all the knowledge we possess has come through some one's mind, so all the goodness there is in the world has come through some one's example. Even dogmatic theology is no exception to the general rule. The Roman Catholic Church, in distinguishing between natural and supernatural (or revealed) religion, teaches that the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are doctrines of natural religion, while the



doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, belongs to revealed religion. The distinction would be quite as forcible, possibly more so, if it were reversed; for the doctrine of the Trinity can be watched in the making. It is nowhere explicitly stated in the New Testament. It originated from a certain conception which arose about the nature of Christ Himself, then from a study of certain hints in the Scriptures and was elaborated into its complete form by daring and ingenious speculation. If it be replied that human thought would never have taken the path it did but for the Divine guidance, the reply is that but for the same divine guidance, the course of evolution would never have produced man; if there had been no unseen universe pressing in upon and inspiring him, *homo sapiens* would have been *homo alalus* still. So the gulf between the natural and the supernatural narrows away into nothing, as it must do if we believe in one God, who is the same whether we read of Him in the Book of Nature, or the Book of Man, or the Book of History. If we look at religion from below upwards, it is natural supernaturalism; if we look at it from above downwards, it is supernatural naturalism, but it is all of a piece in any case.

We see, too, unfortunately, how individualistic religion and collective religion get to be at daggers drawn. Collective religion places authority in the mass, the aggregate, which it endows with infallibility. It is thus driven to regard revelation as something unique, miraculous, peculiar to itself, while it proclaims the impossibility of the individual intellects arriving at the truth. Individualistic religion regards every human soul as open to the invisible world, as a receiver, so to speak, catching messages from what seems to an outsider the eternal silence; from this same source the soul gains not only new ideas, but fresh experiences, and in these ideas and experiences lies the possibility both of revival and of progress. What is the natural history of every religious revival, whether inside the Catholic Church or outside it? All around coldness and death have seemed to reign. Then there comes one whose experience is that of the Psalmist, "My sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me: while I was musing, the fire kindled: *then* spake I with my tongue." Did ever an organisation catch fire all at once? did ever a corporation reform itself from within?

The Promethean fire-spark is always hidden in the hollow of some individual soul; thus is it brought down from heaven, and thus light arises in a darkened world. But, as we may see hereafter, this second schism in religion is also bad, this setting of corporate religion against individual religion, just as we saw it was bad to set the heart against the head. Individualism in religion is indispensable, but collectivism has its uses if it be kept in its proper place.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE STUMBLING-STONE OF JESUS CHRIST.

As Jesus Christ is the chief evidence of His own religion, so, in a sense, He is the greatest obstacle in the way of its reception. The reason of this is that many begin with Christianity at the wrong end. They start with the doctrine of the Trinity. They ponder the words of the Athanasian Creed, "so the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, yet there are not three Gods but one God," and they stick fast. But this is where Christianity ends, if it ends at all, not where it begins. Students of mathematics do not start with the Higher Algebra or the Differential Calculus, but with Arithmetic, with the concrete facts of number. Mathematics is "only sums" at the outset. Let us try and look at the matter in the light of the preceding chapters. Two closely related ideas came to light in them: infallibility and revelation; revelation telling us things we could never discover for ourselves, and infallibility guaranteeing revelation and giving it certainty. It will now be our endeavour to show in what relation Jesus Christ stands to these ideas.

Christ comes before us in the Gospels at first sight as a human being; He is born of a woman, obeys His parents, earns His own living by handicraft, grows in wisdom and stature, and at length, emerging from obscurity, enters on a public career. If we are to remain faithful to experience as our guide, it is with this human side that we must begin. Revelation, we saw, is always personal; it takes human feelings, human intellect, human speech, and uses them as its means of expression. It can do no other, whatever view we take of its origin. Christ then is to be judged by what He said and did, and above all by what He was. With His words there are few to quarrel. His standard at any rate was high enough. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." There can be no standard higher than perfection, and that is what

we are bidden to aim at. Few also will quarrel with His acts. He went about doing good, and He was faithful unto death for what He believed to be right and true.

It is when we come to inquire what He was that the difficulty arises, a difficulty which must not be shirked. Christ Himself preached the doctrine that spiritual illumination comes through purity of nature. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is a verse which comes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." These words are from the Fourth Gospel, but they are in entire accord with the whole spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ. On this assumption a perfect revelation of God can only come through a morally perfect being. "What think ye of Christ?" is still the supreme question which Christianity asks. The more highly we think of Him, the more highly we shall prize His revelation, but it is only when we can accept His moral perfection that we can regard that revelation as complete and final.

Let us take a concrete example from the Sermon on the Mount. Christ there gently rebukes us for being so anxious about our temporal affairs: what we shall eat and what we shall drink, and He exhorts us, in opposition to our general practice, to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness. This is what we have called revelation by education. Christ is here the teacher, but He says further about these temporal concerns of ours, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Here is the supreme fact which we all desire to be sure of. Christ tells us of it as of His own knowledge, the knowledge we need not ourselves possess. Here He is the revealer. If Christ were morally perfect and His spiritual insight perfect also, here is an infallible assurance of the mercy and love of God.

Into this question of the moral perfection of Jesus Christ it is not necessary to enter again; it has been treated of in the previous volume, but a brief summary of the case may here be permitted. Christ's own standard was perfection, it was by no lowering of it that He escaped the sense of imperfection in Himself. At the same time He is extraordinarily sensitive to the sin that is in man. Take any chapter in the Synoptic Gospels, the 18th chapter of St. Matthew

for instance; it has its difficulties and obscurities, but certain things stand out with startling clearness. Purity, innocence and humility, even as the purity, innocence and humility of little children, are essential to entrance into the kingdom of religion, and are given the highest places in it. Whoever receives and loves a little child because of these qualities receives Christ Himself. Whoever makes a little child sin "it is profitable for him that a great millstone be hanged about his neck and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea." Woe to the world because of sin, but above all woe to the man through whom sin comes. If our sins are as dear to us as hand or foot or eye, we must cast them from us. It is better to enter into life halt or maimed rather than be cast whole into the eternal fire. As we are sinful ourselves and so need forgiveness, we must forgive others though they sin against us. Forgiveness must be without limit, even as is the forgiveness of God to us. If we forgive not, we cannot be forgiven, but God will exact the full penalty of our sins from us.

Here then, set over against the standard of perfection, we have Christ's almost overwhelming sense of sin, and His corresponding earnestness about forgiveness—the need of our obtaining it for ourselves from God and giving it in our turn to our fellow-men. Yet He who had this high standard, this sensitiveness to evil, this earnestness about forgiveness, who forgave His own murderers, never felt the need of repentance for Himself, never felt the need of forgiveness; on the contrary, He identifies Himself with the innocence and purity of childhood "whoso receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me." What inference can we draw but that Christ was never conscious of any need either for repentance or forgiveness, and shall we not do well to be careful how we explain that consciousness away?

Yet Christ Himself, so it seems, would have put such arguments as we have been using in a secondary place. In the Sermon on the Mount He tells us, "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." We may be quite orthodox, and say Lord, Lord, with the utmost fluency, we may even prophesy in that name, and in that name do many mighty works, but Christ



will have none of us if we will not give up our sins, but remain workers of iniquity. Obedience comes first, and if it is loving and sincere, orthodoxy is implied in it and will take care of itself.

Christ in the Gospels comes to us before all else as a Teacher and as an Example—the embodiment of His own teaching. Can we then, laying aside the question of orthodoxy for the moment, ask, to begin with, how Christ teaches, what lines He follows, what foundation He builds on? In reply it may be said that His appeal is to intuition, to our innate sense of truth and right. He does not attempt to drive us into the kingdom of heaven by coercive argument. He has supreme authority because of His moral perfection, but He does not wield it brutally as a man does who says: "Believe this or you will without doubt perish everlastingly." He tells us the truth, and trusts to its inherent excellence to mould our wills and change our hearts. He states the truth, and trusts to its shining in upon us by its own light. Needless to say He does not hold any doctrine of total depravity. On the contrary, He maintains that men can recognise what is true and what is good when it is presented to them. The saying that "at the ultimate moment of choice we feel that right is right, and wrong, wrong," is entirely Christian. "The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." So in the parable of the Sower we read of those who hear the truth with "an honest and good heart," and hold it fast. Sincerity is the key to both intellectual and moral illumination. Such is the teaching, as we have already seen, of the Old and the New Testament alike.

A single example will suffice. We read early in St. Mark of an incident which raised the question of whether the Jewish religion, with its strict Sabbatarianism, allowed the healing of the sick on the seventh day of the week. Christ is represented as putting the problem in this way: "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm, to save a life, or to kill?" The appeal here is to intuition, to the light that is in us, to conscience or to common sense, whichever of the two we please to call it. Over against intuition stood authority with its claim of infallibility, and Christ appealed against its decision to the light within. Conscience then, as now and always, had to give the final verdict.

If Christ was thus alive to the good side of human nature, He was equally alive to the bad with all its possibilities. To the words "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light," He adds "but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness."

There is a difficult passage in the Gospels, one of the most difficult, which seems to bear on this point. Christ's opponents were so embittered against Him as to declare that He did good by the aid of the powers of evil. Now people who can talk in that way no longer feel that right is right, and wrong, wrong. They deliberately confound the two and put wrong for right. Their power of intuition, the inward light, has turned to darkness, and then how great is the darkness! "All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they have blasphemed," all actual sins, and all possible heterodoxies can be got over. It is the quenching of the inward light that is fatal, and is the one "eternal sin." Thus much I think there is in the passage, whatever else there may be.

The inward light and the power of choice are but another way of describing moral responsibility and the right of private judgment. There are the familiar words at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. "Every one therefore which heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof." There is abundant claim to authority here, but no compulsion. Christ respects the freedom of the human will. It is the essence of the Old Testament embodied in the Author of the New. "See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

Another distinctive note of the teaching of Christ is His recog-

nition of happiness as the ultimate goal of man's endeavour. He may seem to soar above the possibilities of human nature, with His standard of perfection (though if He had not chosen this high standard, would it not have been made argument against Him?), but here He comes down again to human nature, as the course of its evolution has made it. The first recorded word of Christ's public teaching is "blessed." The Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes, the Christian's guide to happiness. True it is that Christ uses a word of His own. Blessedness is happiness through goodness, but the happiness is there and is fundamental and ultimate. "Blessed are ye," says the final Beatitude, "when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." The same note runs all through the Sermon. "When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee."

There are three ways of dealing with man's innate desire for happiness; the first is to crush it; the second is to strive to satisfy it unworthily; the third is to satisfy it worthily. The first was the method of the Stoics, and certain of that school survive to-day. This method has already been commented on.

The Stoics took as their guiding principle "to live according to nature." It is impossible to live according to nature and leave happiness out of account. Happiness and unhappiness greet us the first moment we draw breath. Children as they grow older find happiness in the smiles upon the faces of their parents, unhappiness in their looks of displeasure. Here is the origin of the moral distinctions we learn to make; and pleasure and pain, the results of Love and Fear, become our guides to higher things.

At the same time that is the cheapest and most superficial of criticisms which charges Christianity with being but a form of bribery and corruption whereby its devotees are paid to cultivate virtue and avoid vice. If Christianity recognises happiness it equally finds a place for sorrow. Its idea of sorrow cannot be better expressed than by the Latin word *tribulatio*, the separation of the chaff from the wheat, "through many tribulations we must enter

into the kingdom of God." Our souls must be purged from all unworthy elements, and then only are we fit for and can attain to happiness. Carlyle saw this side of Christianity clearly. In the chapter already quoted he goes on to say, "Small is it that thou canst trample the Earth with its injuries under thy feet, as old Greek Zeno trained: thou canst love the Earth while it injures thee, and even because it injures thee; for this a greater than Zeno was needed, and He too was sent. Knowest thou that '*Worship of Sorrow*'? The Temple thereof founded some eighteen centuries ago, now lies in ruins, overgrown with jungle, the habitation of doleful creatures; nevertheless, venture forward; in a low crypt, arched out of falling fragments, thou findest the Altar still there, and its sacred Lamp perennially burning." Carlyle could not penetrate the darkness and look forward to the happiness beyond, or find the happiness which begins here and now; but without that happiness the world, as we have seen, cannot be rationalised or made to square with our sense of justice. Christ then presses both happiness and sorrow into His service, and in so doing meets the requirements of human nature.<sup>1</sup>

If these are the general lines on which Christ's teaching proceeded, there are one or two special characteristics of it which seem worthy of mention. Nothing can be farther removed from the mind of Christ than the spirit of persecution, as witness this incident: "And the disciples went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans. And they did not receive Him. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? But He turned and rebuked them. And they went to another village."

Not only did Christ rebuke the persecuting spirit, but He showed the utmost toleration. Did He live to-day, orthodoxy would denounce Him as a Liberal and a Latitudinarian. "John said unto Him, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able lightly to speak evil of Me. For he that is

<sup>1</sup> *Sartor Resartus*. Book II., Chap. IX



not against Me is for Me." "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him."

If Christ thus appealed to conscience, and founded Himself on the moral responsibility of the individual, it follows of necessity that He took a practical view of religion, and put conduct before creed. The Sermon on the Mount is ample evidence on that point. "By their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Christ asks of His disciples, trust, and love and obedience. If these things are rendered to Him, orthodoxy is implicit in them.

Christ's appeal being primarily, we might almost say exclusively, to the moral sense, it must be noted that He nowhere promises us intellectual certainty or the solving of our intellectual difficulties. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say He was not interested in them. Take the supreme difficulty, the mystery of evil. So far as I can find there is but one reference to it in the Gospels. "Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh." It must needs be that there should be evil in the world. That is all we are told. It is a simple putting aside of the difficulty, in order to insist on the practical side of the question—"woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh." Moral responsibility is what matters. The mystery of necessity can take care of itself.

Christ was not even interested in the practical application of the principle of justice. We read that "one of the multitude said unto Him, Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. But He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? And He said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The practical moral issue is everything, all the rest seems as nothing.

But though Christ does not promise us the solution of any of our intellectual difficulties, He does promise us, as we have seen, the indirect intellectual help that comes through moral illumination, which in its turn comes through obedience. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God."



Here then are some of the reasons which have given Jesus Christ His unique influence in the world, which made His disciples give up all and follow Him, and drew from Peter the exclamation, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Yet all cannot receive Him or accept His authority as the Perfect Example, the Supreme Teacher. Their difficulties are, I take it, mainly intellectual; and Christ, does not give us any help in solving them, apart from that indicated above. The difficulty of believing in the existence of a morally perfect person is an abstract, *a priori* difficulty. It results from having ready beforehand a theory of what is possible and what is not possible. But pure agnosticism, as Romanes calls it,<sup>1</sup> will not have theories of the possible ready beforehand, but will keep an entirely open mind till the facts are before it. If there were more pure agnosticism, there would be more Christian belief.

I suppose the root difficulty is that of conceiving a person perfect in one respect but limited in other respects. No one, for instance, denies the physical limitations of Jesus Christ. He was born and died, suffered hunger, thirst, fatigue. But Christians do not find these facts any difficulty; on the contrary, they are helpful by keeping before them the human side of their Master. Were it not for these there would be danger of His being exalted too much above us, and being lost in the heights of theology, as for many He is lost.

Why should there be any greater difficulty in believing that Christ was limited on the intellectual side of His nature as well as the physical? Does any one think, for instance, that Christ knew either Greek philosophy or Roman law, or that He was any the less the revelation of God because He did not? Here undoubtedly we approach dangerous ground, because truth is a common element in science, philosophy, morals and religion; and if through want of intellectual apprehension error arises, morality and religion may alike suffer. At this point I think we can discern where the limit must be drawn. Christ must have had intellectual gifts sufficient for moral and religious perfection, but beyond that there is no need for us to go. Now, to my mind, that is precisely how the Gospels

<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 107-110.

depict Him. He has the intellectual insight which morality and religion necessarily bring with them, and that is sufficient for all our needs.

There are some facts drawn from everyday experience which may help us here. Most of us during the course of our lives have heard profound truths about things moral and spiritual from quite simple and uneducated persons, truths which showed the greatest insight, though the individuals in question were absolutely unaware of the fact. Again, who has not heard little children say astonishingly deep things about God and religion? Innocence and intuition seem often to go together. There is also the more general fact, nay, the universal experience that moral and spiritual progress carries with it a measure of intellectual progress. What is primarily an expansion of the emotions, and through them an increase of activity in certain directions, affects and enlarges the mind as well. The words of the Psalmist were meant spiritually, and are primarily true in that sense, but they are also true intellectually :

“The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple,  
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

The Jews, we read, “marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” We read also that Jesus knew what was in man. If purity is the path to spiritual light and knowledge, then perfect purity and complete moral and spiritual illumination would go together, and Christ had all the light necessary to be our infallible teacher and our perfect example, and yet He may have been mentally limited in many things. Is it going too far to suggest that when Christ said, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes,” He had in His mind, not only His disciples, but Himself as well, Him whom His enemies scoffed at as unlettered and untaught, but who could go on to make the tremendous claim, “All things have been delivered to Me of My Father, and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father, neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him”? The argument thus comes back to the point that Christ’s revelation is primarily personal and spiritual rather than intellectual. The writer of the Epistle to the

Hebrews says: "For we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." If Christ could be tempted as we are, and so sympathise with our weaknesses, it must have been through His limitations rather than His perfections. So once more we lay hold on this human side as essential to us.<sup>1</sup>

A more recent perplexity is the view which Christ held on what is called eschatology, or the end of the world. He is deemed to be unworthy of our trust because He thought the end of the world was coming in the immediate future. Personally I cannot see that either of these two instances is a matter which concerns the spiritual life. Nor ought we to press the actual words of the Gospels too far. Christ had to follow the phraseology of His times sufficiently to make Himself intelligible to His hearers, and on the other hand His reporters could scarcely avoid some retranslation of His words into their own language. We are always safer with the spirit than with the letter.

The most hopeful feature of the situation is the general recognition of the moral excellence of Jesus Christ. Some there may be who revile Him; they will never be able to see Him in His beauty. But the best and most thoughtful critics, most of them of varying degree of heterodoxy, agree in believing that Christ had a richer and fuller communion with God, and a deeper insight into things spiritual than any other human being before or since. He "knew what was in man," and He had a supreme sense of the presence of God. Such is practically the unanimous verdict of scientific criticism. Here then is One who is nearer the facts than we are; and

<sup>1</sup> A concrete example of this border region where intellectual and moral truth touch and mingle may be found in Romanes' *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 180-182, under the heading "Christian Demonology." The writer says, "It will be said, 'However you may seek to explain away *a priori* objections to miracles on *a priori* grounds, there remains the fact that Christ accepted the current superstition in regard to diabolic possession. Now the devils damn the doctrine. For you must choose the horn of your dilemma, either the current theory was true or it was not. If you say true, you must allow that the same theory is true for all similar stages of culture, and therefore that the most successful exorcist is Science, albeit Science works not by faith in the theory, but by rejection of it. . . . On the other hand, if you choose the other horn, you must accept either the hypothesis of the ignorance or that of the mendacity of Christ.'" Romanes' answer is that "either hypothesis may be accepted by Christianity."

the nearer we deem Him to be, the higher must be His authority for us. Thus it is in ordinary life, and thus it is in the spiritual life. It is something to be able to reach this point, even if one cannot go beyond it.

Christ's disciples from the first have gone further. Christ Himself desired that they should; if they had not done so, Christianity would never have established itself in the world, the Christian Church would never have been founded. What was the path they took?

There is an interesting account in the Gospels of the first sceptic, who was no other than John the Baptist. His difficulty was an intellectual one. Christ did not conform to his preconceived idea of Him. So he sent and asked Him, "Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" Christ in His reply followed His ordinary custom. He gave a spiritual answer to an intellectual perplexity. He first appealed to the outward; to the works of love and mercy which He wrought on those who were in need; to their intrinsic divinity which is intuitively perceived; next, to the inward, to His message to mankind, the Gospel of salvation, also appealing intuitively to the heart; and finally to Himself, the fact of facts, His own best evidence: "blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me."

But spiritual answers must be tested in spiritual ways. What are these? They are faith and love, issuing in obedience, or the order may be reversed; and obedience come first, followed by love and faith. Here we reach the region of mysticism, of the contact of spirit with spirit, which cannot be intellectually marked out, nor surveyed, but outside which religion cannot exist. This refuge of mysticism is another stumbling-block, but that cannot be helped. "If you ask how religion falls on the thorns and faces death, and in the very act annuls annihilation, I cannot explain the matter, for it is religion's secret." So writes the sceptical philosopher.<sup>1</sup> He saw that the mystery existed, and that this it is which changes mere speculation into conviction and the glow and activity of life.

The Fourth Gospel is a great battle-ground of the critics, and the difficulties it presents are many and serious, but we cannot well

<sup>1</sup> James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 49.



go wrong in regarding it as embodying the essence of the inner and mystical teaching of Christ. It sets forth the way of illumination as we have been endeavouring to describe it. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself unto him." "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself."

No one who has ever reflected on the nature of religion can be surprised at the result we have reached. The sphere of religion was defined as the relations between God and the soul. Each of the factors has its part to play. We have striven to say something of the soul's needs, of its capacities, and of its response. But there must be the operation of the Divine Spirit as well, or there can be no religion. Starting from this end we again reach the region of mysticism. The New Testament is quite frank on the point. It is not possible to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, *i.e.* that He is the revelation of God, except by the Spirit of God; but this is no hard condition, for, as we read, "if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Religion indeed builds her mystic temple, with its inner shrine hidden from the gaze of those who stand outside, but the secret is in a sense no secret. The doors of the temple stand open day and night; they are love and faith, and the service within is that of simple obedience. Those who love and obey do not find their intellectual perplexities solved or all their difficulties dispelled, but they can bid their doubts remove and stand aside. Here they are content to know in part and to wait for such fuller light as may hereafter be vouchsafed them. Such then is the Christian idea of growing up. It is spiritual development, and the rest and certainty which come therewith; it is the attainment "unto the full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE STUMBLING-STONE OF FORGIVENESS.

IN our two books we have taken experience as our guide, but we have so far said little about definitely Christian experience. The subject was hinted at in the last chapter of *The Manuscripts of God*, where we spoke of salvation through service. Christian experience is of great variety, and no one person can be an exact guide for any other person; still certain types of Christian experience stand out clearly. Let us take two which are strongly contrasted. The first is of those who are fortunate in their surroundings; from infancy they are protected against evil influences and encouraged to pursue that which is good. Religion comes to them as duty inspired by love, and as unselfish service of their fellow-men. All workers of righteousness reap an immediate reward—the answer of a good conscience. If they can advance a stage further and attain to the answer of a good conscience toward God, they have entered the realm of religion, and are enjoying a simple and widespread form of religious experience. But it is of an elementary type. As knowledge of ourselves and of others developes, we become increasingly aware of defects in our obedience and in our service. There will come mistaken action, lost opportunities, weariness in well-doing; and these things bring a sense of imperfection and shortcoming. The sins may be chiefly those of omission, but they are sins all the same, and drive away peace of mind.

At the other extreme stand the open and flagrant transgressors, whose offences are rank and smell to Heaven. When the inward change occurs in them it is accompanied by extreme agitation of feeling; there is intense conviction of wrong-doing, remorse, despair. This state may be very prolonged before the release comes. Here the sense of sin is very acute, and it is felt that service can only come through salvation. Between these two extremes there are numberless intermediate experiences of different degrees of intensity. If we may diverge a moment it may be pointed out that

what is known as the Evangelical School of Christians seems to have gone astray through not recognising this diversity of experience. The school in question has been too prone to insist that every one should have a vivid awakening to the fact of one's sinfulness and the experience of definite, if not sudden, conversion, whereas observation shows us that there may be a gradual and almost imperceptible coming into the kingdom of religion.

Be this as it may, the experience now under discussion is practically universal. Even critical writers bear testimony to this fact. Professor Leuba defines the religious sense as "the feeling of unwholeness, of moral imperfection, of sin, to use the technical word, accompanied by the yearning after the peace of unity."<sup>1</sup> Whether we begin the religious life with service or salvation, the problem of sin inevitably arises for us.

But here a difficulty meets us. We are told that the younger generation has lost this sense of sin, and that in consequence the ideas of punishment for sin, and deliverance from its guilt and its dominion are incomprehensible and intolerable to it. And in fact I have heard young people talk as if they had never done anything wrong themselves, or known anybody else who had; but language of this kind does not as a rule survive many years of what is known as "knocking about in the world." The tendency then is to cynicism and disbelief in any good.

It may further be observed that if men are losing the sense of sin for themselves, they have not lost it for their neighbours. There is a story that at the late Queen Victoria's Jubilee the Judges resolved to present Her Majesty with an address; so a document was drafted and submitted to a general judicial assembly for approval. It began thus: "Conscious as we are of our own shortcomings." The reader paused. Perhaps he felt instinctively that he was running too strongly counter to the spirit of the age. Then Lord Justice Bowen remarked: "Would it not be better to say, 'Conscious as we are of one another's shortcomings'?" It may be more convincing just now to put the matter in that way. The

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 201. James himself adds, "Undoubtedly this conception covers an immense number of cases."

friends of labour, for example, have an extraordinarily acute perception of the wickedness of capitalists, and capitalists hold equally strong views about the depravity of labour leaders, even to the extent of expressing the wish (in private) that they might be drowned in the depths of the sea, or consigned to a lethal chamber. If this keenness of moral vision could only be made introspective, the personal sense of sin might revive. Still this recognition of our neighbour's defects will serve our purpose. If we have not trespassed against him, he has most certainly trespassed against us. If we are not included among the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance, he is indubitably a sinner, and raises the problem of forgiveness for us, because we must forgive him, even if he can find no reproach in us.

The sense of sin is a question of standard. If you raise your standard sufficiently high, you can see in yourself all the shortcomings you want, and more; if you put the standard sufficiently low, you can get rid of your imperfections altogether. Tolstoy may have said some foolish things, but he has said many wise ones, and in nothing is his teaching more valuable than in this question of standards. As he is so fond of pointing out, the soul cannot endure to be a house divided against itself. If conduct and creed are at variance, either conduct must be brought up to the level of creed, or creed must be brought down to the level of conduct; the two have to be squared somehow. In his story *Resurrection*, for example, this idea runs through the whole book. Even the State-licensed prostitute, Katusha Maslova, conforms to it, and has her own special pleas in extenuation of her life. If people in her hapless position are still uneasy, there is drink in which to drown thought, and if thought refuses to be drowned, there is nothing for it but suicide, which is the open confession that creed cannot be brought down low enough to square with conduct; that the sense of sin remains, in spite of all efforts to be rid of it. The Pharisee in the parable found an easy road to self-complacency. He compared himself with those beneath him, and thanked God that he was "not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." But how fares it with us when we measure ourselves with our own ideals of beauty, truth and goodness, or with these

same ideals as embodied in Jesus Christ? In that case does not the publican's prayer rise to the lips of each one of us, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? So felt our Cambridge Professor, Henry Sidgwick, an ardent lover of truth and a man of blameless life, who wished to be referred to in the last words spoken at his grave as "a sinful man who partly tried to do his duty."<sup>1</sup>

We are thus brought face to face with the problem of forgiveness, called in theological language "justification," or, if we prefer more modern language, "the release from the sense of sin," "the satisfaction of the yearning after peace and unity." No progress can be made towards the understanding of forgiveness unless it is recognised at the outset that its logic is the logic of love. Grafted into the mechanical world of ordinary experience, but rising above it, is a spiritual world, where God hears and answers prayer, and where Christians live as children and not as servants in the home of their Heavenly Father. This is the region where forgiveness has its dwelling-place.

The logic of pure intellect leads to the Eastern doctrine of Karma, which is inexorable necessity, or fate. This is a view insisted on by Eastern religions that no such thing as forgiveness is possible. Man's destiny is fixed, what he sows he must reap, there is no escape from the consequences of action, the penalty is always paid in full. Science also urges the uniformity of natural law as an argument against forgiveness. Karma banishes providence alike from the life of individuals and peoples, it banishes prayer and forgiveness. It can tell us only of "the iron necessity of a mechanical causality which connects every single phenomenon with one or more antecedent causes."<sup>2</sup> Forgiveness, however, whatever its logical difficulties, is a fact of everyday life. There might with advantage be more of it in the world; still it is there, so let us remember that we are about to study a real thing, and a fact of experience.

If we bear in mind the proper logic of forgiveness it may not seem so strange as it otherwise would that in this connexion there has arisen what to many people is the greatest and most perplexing difficulty in the whole of orthodoxy, i.e. the Christian theory of forgiveness, or the doctrine of the Atonement, as it is called. This

<sup>1</sup> Henry Sidgwick, p. 599.

<sup>2</sup> Haeckel, *Riddle of the Universe*, p. 278.



doctrine, we are told, involves the turning upside down of all our moral conceptions. The wrong person is punished and the real offender escapes through this miscarriage of justice. Let us then summon up our patience, and be content for a while to walk slowly along a simple path.

Forgiveness, as we know it, is, for the most part, private, domestic, personal. We can think of it most easily in connexion with our own life at home as children. All was going well; there was the cheerful routine of daily life, with little ups and downs, but nothing serious to mar its peace. Suddenly there was a change, the sun was clouded, there was an uncomfortable tension in the air which checked the merriment of games, and even interfered with the flavour of the food. There had been disobedience, an act of rebellion, a conflict of wills; so for the time being it was war in place of peace. Then came the welcome restoration of harmony; a few tears of repentance, a few half-choked words of confession, or perhaps neither tears nor confession nor a word said on either side, but a simple and cheerful return to obedience. Forthwith the sunshine came back. Forgiveness, then, may be defined as putting personal relationships on their normal footing of harmony, or making them as they were before the commission of the offence. In other words, it is treating the sinner as if he had never sinned at all—an entirely absurd thing from the strictly logical standpoint. In our illustration we postulate a happy state of things, then the wrongful act, bringing with it a feeling of guilt to the doer and injury to the sufferer of the wrong. Forgiveness comes; the sense of guilt and injury vanish, and it is as though the wrongful act had never been. Yet though things are in a sense the same, it may be they are not the same. There is a subtle feeling that the delinquency in question will not recur, that the offender has gained something of moral strength, or, in theological words, a step has been taken in the process of sanctification and redemption, and so good has come out of evil.

Our supposed case is designedly simple. The fault may have been rudeness of speech, or refusal to obey a command; an apology, a compliance meet the case. There are two parties and two parties only—the sinner and the sinned against, and the change in their



relations is entirely inward and spiritual. No sacrifice is demanded except the sacrifice of the will. There is this form of Christian forgiveness. It is the experience of those who live at home in the Father's house, who are His children, and are treated by Him as such. If His children confess their sins, "He is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness."

But most cases of wrongdoing are of wider range. To go back to our family illustration. What if the upset had been caused, say, by John's having mutilated or destroyed Mary's doll? Here a third party complicates the situation. John may repent, and his parents and Mary forgive him, and treat him once more as though he had never done anything amiss, but what about the doll? It remains spoilt or non-existent, and Mary is deprived of the use and enjoyment of it. Here we are face to face with the consequences of action, the most terrible problem that life presents us with. It is strange what trivial incidents of our childhood stay with us while the memory of important events fades away. One of my most vivid recollections is of going to stay with a relation, of wandering into the stable-yard, and of turning on a tap and not being able to turn it off again. Happily the coachman was near, and delivered me out of my distress. I often think of that incident because it has for me a moral significance. Do we not all go through life turning on taps we cannot turn off again, and the consequences come streaming forth in appalling volume?

But we have not quite finished with our illustration. John, confronted with the difficulty of the doll, produces money which his grandmama had given him to spend on himself, and buys Mary a new doll. He thus makes atonement for his sin. Atonement then, deals with the consequences of sin, and puts things as well as persons back in the same position as they were before. It is the complement of forgiveness, and, like forgiveness, a fact of everyday life. There is yet another complication we must introduce. What if John has no money? How can he make atonement then? Here we may finally suppose that grandmama comes to the rescue. She buys Mary a new doll, and there is at last a restoration of former conditions. Yet another complication may be mentioned. All

goes well for the moment, then John recollects that this is not the first time he has made havoc of Mary's property, and papa has said that the next time John did so he would be whipped. Papa will be back from his office at 6 o'clock, and what will happen then? Grandmama is again equal to the occasion; she promises to act as go-between, or mediator, between John and Papa. So when the latter comes home she sees him, tells him the whole story, and adding that she is having a most pleasant visit at the house, which she does not wish to have marred by any untoward occurrence, begs that John, being penitent, may be let off the whipping. Here we have come upon two facts of ordinary experience—vicarious punishment, and what the theologians call imputed righteousness or transferred merit. In the first place grandmama has done no wrong, yet she is deprived of her property to the value of the doll. Punishment has fallen on the wrong party, yet the wrong party does not resent it, but in all probability finds pleasure in the sacrifice. How can head logic justify either the act or the attitude? They can only be justified by the logic of the heart.

In the second place, papa, for his mother's sake, breaks his word, and lets John off his punishment. His mother's merit is great in his eyes, and there is sufficient of it to allow John a share in it and to be reckoned good when he has not been good. Here again, how can these proceedings be justified by any formal or mechanical logic? Yet, who would condemn any of the parties who are acting as they have done? There is love and mercy on the one side, and repentance on the other, and these things are above logic.

Theologians, however, have been intently set on a *rationale* or intellectual explanation of forgiveness, atonement and vicarious sacrifice. They have set up their theories, and terrible reading many of them make. It is as though one laid a corpse on the table and dissected it with a view to finding the soul. One device has been to pass over the view of God as Father, and to regard Him as a king whose subjects have rebelled against Him, or as a Judge vindicating His immutable moral law. Thus the law court idea has been uppermost, with what is called the juridical or forensic view of justification—the acquittal or declaring just of offenders who deserve to be punished. Help has been sought from the fact that

in a court of law a fine is not always paid by the actual delinquent, but by a third party. But the law courts are the last place in the world to look to for a theory of forgiveness. Their function is to punish, not to forgive. They certainly do not follow the practise of finding one man guilty and then punishing somebody else. And as to payment by a third party, the law does not care who pays the fine, or who discharges the debt; it cares very much that the fine is paid, or the debt discharged; it looks simply to the result, and does not inquire further. Justice, as we have shown, is an intellectual virtue, consisting in the correct adjustment of services and rewards, of efforts and benefits, which implies the elimination of all personal feeling. We can never by taking the high road of justice come to the city of mercy. The way to mercy follows another path altogether.

How then have the ideas of substitution, vicarious punishment and the like had such immense vogue in religion? Let it be said at once that they are never attributed to God in the New Testament. Christ's conception of forgiveness is always pure mercy. "A certain lender had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both." Then there is the parable in that chapter already quoted, Matthew xviii., where the man owes ten thousand talents, and his lord commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had. "The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt." In the parable of the Prodigal Son mercy is impatient to forgive. "But while he was yet afar off his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." So does Christ still tell us to "go and learn what *this* meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."<sup>1</sup>

The ideas in question are perfectly legitimate in their own order, and have their origin in man's natural instincts. They are the offspring of the human point of view, just as, to compare great things with small, John's point of view is different from his grandmother's. But as this illustration may be thought beneath the

<sup>1</sup> The language of Article II. of the XXXIX. Articles is unscriptural, "To reconcile His Father to us."

dignity of the argument, let us take one of more tragic significance. To this end we may go back to the incident of the station-master, as related in the previous volume.

There is a law in nature that two material bodies cannot be in the same place at the same time, and this is a good law, without which the world could not go on. It is also an extremely dangerous law to disregard, especially if one of the bodies is moving rapidly, and the other body happens to be our own. Against this law the little boy on the platform sinned in ignorance, and helplessness. He fell on the rail where the express train was immediately to come, and would have paid the penalty with his life, but for the station-master. The station-master sinned against the law with his eyes open; he deliberately put himself in the child's place, and was thus the means of his deliverance. Here is an extreme and tragic case of the preservation of life, of expiation, of redemption, at the hands of a mediator through vicarious or substitutionary suffering and punishment. All these ideas are there as facts, not as theological figments. The idea of punishment has come in quite naturally, because punishment, in a sense, has really been inflicted.

For the further elucidation of this point, let us suppose the child old enough to be to some extent morally responsible, and that his mother, being compelled momentarily to leave him, did so with a caution about going too near the edge of the platform. The child disregards this caution, and falls over—with consequences. If he did not at the time fully understand the method of his salvation, he would do so in after years. In that case he would find Biblical language singularly appropriate. If he went to the New Testament he would say of the station-master: "He was made sin for me who knew no sin"; or if he went to the Old Testament, he could say, "Surely he bore my grief, and carried my sorrow, yet I must esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for my transgression, he was bruised for my iniquity; the chastisement of my peace was upon him, and with his stripes I was healed."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The chapter from which these phrases are taken (Isaiah liii.) is the most striking and vivid statement in all literature of the fact of vicarious suffering and punishment. Probably no single passage in Scripture has had so profound and prolonged an influence on the thought of the Church, and in it is embodied the mystery of atonement for Catholic and Protestant alike.



But would that be the station-master's point of view? Let us suppose that he was dragged from under the train while still breathing. Would anybody have thought of going up to him and saying, "You have committed a breach of a law of nature, and God, the author of nature, has punished you for so doing, and has thereby punished the wrong person"? Would such be the thoughts in the station-master's mind? Can we not rather think of him as collecting his ebbing strength to ask, "Is the child safe?" and then dying with a look of content upon his face? So what is punishment from the point of view of the saved is not punishment to the mediator, the saviour, but victory over evil.

The difference which view-point makes deserves further notice. Let us take the express train in our illustration. From the point of view of the passengers inside, it is the quickest and most convenient way of getting to where they want to be from where they do not want to be. It is a triumph of modern civilisation for which they are duly thankful. To the mother and the station-master it is a murderous monster rushing without remorse to slay the child. The train is to each group of persons what they think it is. The world to Hamlet seemed a prison-house, Denmark being one of the worst. "We think not so, my lord," said his companions. "Then," he retorted, "'tis none to you, for there is nothing but thinking makes it so." If a mountain has two faces, one a gradual ascent, and the other a sheer inaccessible precipice, do we say that the one side of the mountain contradicts the other? Do not both sides go to make one mountain? So the divine and human sides of the atonement may be different and yet unite to form one whole.

The sense of sin brings with it the feeling of guilt and the fear of punishment. This last is a real idea of a real thing, because sin, like everything else, has its consequences, and religion must be able to deal with them, or write itself down a failure. We must, however, never forget that it is a human idea, and comes to us when we take the human point of view, and only then.

It has been said, for instance, that not only is there no theory of the atonement in the parable of the Prodigal Son, but no hint of atonement of any kind. But here a point needs to be made which seems to be often overlooked. Christ does ever and again take the



human point of view, but that is through His unique power of sympathy. It is the divine point of view which Christ instinctively and habitually takes. All three salvation parables in Luke xv. are framed on these lines, but when the Good Shepherd comes back from the wilderness bearing the lost sheep upon His shoulders, we may surely think of Him as carrying, not only the lost sheep itself, but all its wanderings and the consequences of them. Even in the Parable of the Prodigal Son the son himself is represented as laboring under a sense of guilt and as assessing his own punishment "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: *make me one of thy hired servants.*"

To argue from the divine point of view to the human leads to the same confusion as arguing from the human point of view back to the divine, witness the difficulty we started with—that of God punishing the wrong person. No, let us keep the two sets of ideas—on God's part pure mercy, love, goodness, victory over evil; and on our part the meeting of all our wants, the pardon of our guilt, the bearing of our punishment, the setting right the consequences of our sin. It is not given to human intelligence to reconcile justice and mercy; we see that they use different logics, and that the logic of the one excludes the logic of the other; but we may have faith that what is impossible for man is possible with God. In the divine nature and in the divine action justice and mercy are one. So the Psalmist sings:

"Surely God's salvation is nigh to them that fear Him,  
Mercy and truth have met together;  
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other,  
Truth springeth out of the earth,  
And righteousness hath looked down from Heaven."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE SAME (CONTINUED).

HAVING cleared away this preliminary difficulty, let us now take an example of one who needs forgiveness in the religious sense, who has offended not against a physical law, but against the moral law. An extreme case will serve our purpose best. Suppose the man who, as set out in the previous book, led the widow's son astray, to be upon his deathbed, and at the eleventh hour to have awakened to the real character of his misdeeds. Orestes slew only his mother's body; he did not slay her soul; yet he was pursued by all the Furies. The tempter in our story has not only slain a mother's happiness, but her son's soul, and other souls as well. The man's remorse is equalled only by his despair. What amends can he make for all the ruin he has wrought? If the souls he has slain and the happiness he has wrecked are to be required of him, how can he stand? There are these cases of remorse and despair. What can the substitutes for religion say to them? What can social reform do for them, or Art, or Education, or Science, or Philosophy? Can even Liberal Christianity help? The only thing Rationalism can do is to confess its own utter failure by blurring the whole thing over and writing on it, "There is no solution of this or any other mystery; we live in a world which it is impossible to rationalise." If the difficulty is to be met at all, it must be by religion. Man's extremity must be religion's opportunity, or it breaks down altogether. Can love avail, though logic fail? Christianity avers that it can, and comes bringing forgiveness and atonement with it. It says to the man in his agony, "You yourself cannot make reparation; you owe a debt you can never pay. But with God all things are possible. Christ has done for you, and will do for you, what you cannot do for yourself. If you can in penitence accept what He has wrought; if you can in faith leave all with God, your sin, its consequences to yourself, its consequences to others, and cast yourself wholly on His mercy, forgiveness, salvation, atonement are yours."

Such is Evangelical doctrine, the Gospel, the good news. It is not addressed to the righteous, the just in their own eyes, but to sinners who know themselves to be such. And here one may note the deficiencies and shortcomings of what is known as the ethical theory of the Atonement. The ethical theory had a concrete illustration in the love of the widowed mother for her son. She hoped that by continual patience, forbearance and kindness she might appeal to her son's better nature, that the good side of him might come uppermost, and that he might thus return to the paths of righteousness. So many thinkers have held, and do hold, that Christ saves us by the silent appeal which His teaching, His life, and His death is ever making to us; and that all that is needed from us is repentance, faith, and love. This view is no doubt true as far as it goes, but is it the whole truth? Would it meet the case of the eleventh-hour remorse with which we started this chapter? Would the man in question feel that he on his part could repent enough, trust enough, love enough, to ensure his own salvation? Would he not instinctively demand a helper outside himself, an objective ground for his forgiveness, a helper to whom he could absolutely surrender the task of doing for him what he could never do for himself? This instinctive need of outside help is also felt by those at the other end of the moral scale, by persons who have a specially tender conscience. If the conditions of salvation are repentance, faith, and love, can they ever be satisfied that their repentance is deep enough, their faith firm enough, or their love warm enough? They too want something outside themselves, one who can supplement all their shortcomings.

The whole question bristles with difficulties to the present generation; so much so that it may appear hopeless to maintain that there is anything credible in it anywhere. Hard as the task is, it must be attempted. Perhaps we may begin with the proposition that the man in our illustration at any rate needs forgiveness. If there is such a thing as forgiveness at all, his is a case for it. He needs, if he can, to forgive himself for a worse than wasted life. He needs the forgiveness of his victims, he needs the forgiveness of the mother; and if there is a God, he needs the forgiveness of God.

Again, the man in question is salvable, if there is such a thing

as salvation. There is yet soundness in him which can, as it were, be made the basis of remedial operations. It is indeed a case of the bruised reed and the smoking flax; but remorse itself, horror at one's wrong-doing, proves that conscience is not dead; and while conscience lives there is hope. Were there simply callous indifference, the outlook, for all this world can tell us, would be black indeed.

A further question may arise in the minds of some. Ought such a man as we have depicted to be forgiven at all? Is it not rather fitting that he should suffer the penalty for sins so heinous? But this is dangerous ground to take up. Where are we going to draw the line when once we begin limiting forgiveness? It would be wise not to endanger our own safety, nor the safety of those we love. We or they may one day require forgiveness on a very ample scale. Salvation to the uttermost alone meets human needs. This being so, how does Christianity establish a connexion between its salvation and those who need it? A pure life was lived, an undeserved death endured many centuries ago in an obscure corner of the world. How are these events to be brought into relation with a wicked man of to-day in his last hours?

Let us go back to daily life, to ordinary experience, for help in our perplexity. One of the strangest and most inexplicable phenomena of life is transferable merit, a more up-to-date description than imputed righteousness, which is its theological equivalent. Transferable merit is, I repeat, one of the strangest things in the world, but it exists. I made its acquaintance at a very early date in my life. I was the smallest of small boys when I was sent one day to execute a little commission. The proprietor of the shop came forward, "I am sure I know your name," he said. I found he did. "There is sixpence," he added, "because you are like your mother." What a strange reason for an action, when one comes to consider it. Being like your mother is not a merit; you can't help it; but it was worth to me on this occasion sixpence in hard cash. Could my friend's act be justified logically, or put in syllogistic form as thus:—

"All boys who are like their mothers ought to have sixpence;  
This boy is like his mother:  
Therefore he ought to have sixpence"?



What about the major premise? It has no logical validity, as anyone can see, but is the kindly act to be condemned on that account? Love is always laughing at logic. It has, as we have so often said, a logic of its own, and one of the first propositions in it is "any reason is good enough for doing a kind act." Such a proposition is in a way perplexing, but the principle is acted on, and if we ignore it we go wrong. It was my mother's merit which got me that sixpence. The giver of it knew my mother and admired her (as well he might), and as he could not well give her sixpence, he gave it to me. My mother was good, and it was imputed to me for righteousness. Her merit was transferred to her unworthy son. The gift was for her sake.

If this illustration be thought unworthy of the gravity of the subject, here is another. I am in great need, and I go to my friend A. He cannot help me, but he knows one who can. I take a letter of introduction and get all and more than all I ask. I am overcome and stammer out thanks as best I can. "Do not mention it," says my helper, "I have a great regard for A, and his friends are my friends." Where again is the logic? but here is the same thing once more, transferable merit, the deserts of parent and friend passed on to me who have none of my own. Our station-master also is a case of transferable merit. If heroism is the highest achievement possible to human nature the merit of heroism was his, yet it meant death to him and life to the child. All the good in it, all the salutary effects of it were passed on from the saviour to the saved.

A new word has come into the English language since I first learned to speak it—solidarity—and it seems to throw further light upon our quest, and to explain to some extent how merit can be transferred from one person to another, so far as an explanation of such a process is possible. We have already come across the word in *The Manuscripts of God*, where Kropotkin says, "It is not love to my neighbour—whom I often do not know at all—which induces me to seize a pail of water and rush towards his house when I see it on fire; it is a far wider though more vague feeling or instinct of human solidarity."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mutual Aid*, p. xiii.



Let us go back once more to our station-master. He rescued the boy, but there were limits to his self-sacrifice. If the woman's luggage had tumbled over or her dog, he would have stayed where he was. But had it been a French boy, or a Chinese boy, a black boy or a white boy, it would have made no difference. There is no solidarity between men and portmanteaus or between men and dogs, but there is solidarity between one human being and another, a mysterious unity which binds us all together. If there is solidarity in this widest sense, there is solidarity in a narrower sense. He who benefits my child benefits me; he who injures my child injures me; such intimate connexion is there between me and those who are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. There was solidarity between me and my mother; it was the channel through which her merit flowed to me, and the kindness done to me flowed back to her.

The Bible is full of this doctrine of solidarity. Did not Christ say that he who gives a cup of cold water only to one of His little ones in the name of a disciple shall not lose his reward? When too in that awful vision of the Last Judgment the King says, "I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; naked and ye clothed Me; I was sick and ye visited Me; for inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me," we recognise the same principle.

The simile of an army may help us to a fuller understanding of the principle of solidarity. A general is nothing without his soldiers, and the soldiers are nothing without their general. When victory comes, it comes to all, and the newest and rawest recruit has his share in it. The fact that he has been enrolled in the army is sufficient. I may be permitted to draw an illustration from what is an unlikely source. The hero of one of Scott's novels, Quentin Durward, in his wanderings in France, cuts down the body of a gipsy whom he finds hanging on a tree. For this act he falls into imminent danger of being himself hanged on the spot. Some archers of the Scottish Guard come up, and one of them claims Durward as his nephew. It is in vain. Then the leader of the archers swears that he had that day enrolled the young man as one of the King's soldiers. This is a plea which cannot be disregarded. A soldier of the King is inviolate till his Master's will is known.

The man who feels remorse for his sins, has at least begun to turn his back on evil and to look towards the good, and even on this slenderest ground may be enrolled in the army of the Living God.

In these matters early training counts for much in determining our point of view. I remember once when I was very young going into the room where my mother sat. She was in an unusual state of spiritual exaltation. The Bible lay open in her lap. She drew me towards her, and I listened awe-struck and half-frightened as she spoke to me of "the last things." Some of her actual words I can still recall. She pictured the New Jerusalem, the city of pure gold, but its gates were shut. In front of the city was a great white throne, and One sat thereon. Then she and I and a countless multitude drew near, but we were not afraid because Christ was with us. He that sat on the throne asked, Who are these? And Christ answered, "they are My soldiers, for they wear My uniform, for, see, I have clothed them in the robes of My righteousness." Then God said, "If they are Yours, they are Mine." So the gates were opened and we all went in.

Such was the way in which a bygone generation pictured for itself the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and tried to realise itself as one with the Author of our salvation. They spoke in parable as we must do on these supreme mysteries; but if analogy with what is best in human life has any force, if moral helpfulness is a valid criterion of truth, they spoke with gleams of light in their hearts.

If the New Testament is full of the solidarity of the human race with Christ, it is equally full of the other aspect of the matter, the solidarity of Christ with the human race. As the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren," adding, "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same." The theologians have this fact of solidarity in their minds when they speak of Christ as the representative man, and as suffering as the representative of the human race.

The crude idea then of a vengeful God punishing the wrong person in the form of an innocent victim must be abandoned as consonant neither with Scripture nor common sense. The question

then comes, if this wrong view cannot stand, what is the real view which Christianity takes of forgiveness and atonement? We have seen how men look at them; how does God look at them? The human idea of wrongdoing and its consequences of guilt and punishment sinks into the background: it is too personal, too individual to fill the scene. What thrusts itself into the foreground is the battle between good and evil. The divine view, the Christian view, is that of redemption, of victory, the bringing of evil to an end, the triumph of good. In the Synoptic Gospels Christ spoke thus of His own purpose and object: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, and to give His life a ransom for many." In the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles the language is more old-fashioned, and may cause difficulty. Evil is personified, and the victory is over the personal author of it, but the meaning is the same. "For this purpose was the Son of Man manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil." The passage quoted above from the Epistle to the Hebrews about Christ's solidarity with human nature continues in this same sense. Christ shared our flesh and blood "that through death He might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The wrestling was "not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"; in a word, against all the unseen forces of evil. In this contest the New Testament represents Christ as victorious, that "He made a show of the principalities and the powers openly, triumphing over them," just as a Roman general marched up to the Capitol leading the conquered kings and princes in his train. To express the same thought in modern language, with the advent of Jesus Christ there came into the world a new moral and spiritual force which will ultimately overcome the evil of the world, and set right all its consequences. Things will be as if evil never had been.

Such is the fabric Christianity builds; to many it will seem to need much underpinning. We have, in the preceding pages, temporarily abandoned our former method by beginning at the top.

Let us revert to our ordinary procedure and attack our difficulties from below. There lies the Book of Nature; if we turn to its pages can we discern therein any analogy to this victory of good over evil? I remember once listening to a popular preacher. He gave out his text—"With Thee there is forgiveness." Then with dramatic action he closed the Bible. "The Bible is shut," he exclaimed, "Where are we to look for forgiveness?" Then he surveyed Nature (it was in the Huxley and his gladiatorial show days), and finding no forgiveness in her he opened the Bible again. But was this quite a fair representation of the facts? It makes one uneasy when people exalt Revelation at the expense of Nature; for if there is but one God, is He not the same in both? There is no doubt about human forgiveness; it is a fact of life; but can an unforgiving universe produce forgiving people? That is the puzzle. If we look a little more closely we shall find traces of a forgiving spirit even in Nature, which at first sight looks so cruel. Take the case of a man who gradually becomes a drunkard. Nature will be kind to him in two ways. If he will start by not being too much of a drunkard all at once, she will accommodate herself to his growing consumption of alcohol, till at last he will be able to take with seeming impunity a quantity which might have killed him, if he had taken it straight off in the first instance. Next, if he will refrain from being a drunkard too long, Nature will do her best to put him back into the same state as he would have been in if he had never drunk to excess at all. It is possible that she may succeed; and these facts show not only forgiveness but atonement, making the man who has sinned as if he had never sinned at all. Of course there are plenty of unpardonable sins in nature, but within limits she forgives, restores, and redeems.

This healing power of nature, the *vis medecatrix naturae*, is one of the things we ought to wonder at. Take Livingstone's account of how he was seized by a lion in South Africa. The beast shook him and mauled him, and left him with his arm out of joint. There was no one to set it, and he tells how a false joint formed in place of the old joint. That incident has always stuck in my mind as an instance of the kindness of Nature, forgiving transgression, and doing her best to overcome evil and put things back as they were



before. It is but one of many such cases. Some scientists think that all the processes alluded to above can be explained in terms of chemistry and physics. The assumption makes a large demand on our faith. Other scientists have been driven by the facts to postulate a third and higher natural force which they call vitalism. Here is a modern battle-ground on which we need not enter. Suffice it for us that we may believe in forgiveness both in Nature and in experience.

To return to the wider aspect of the problem of which forgiveness forms a part, can one have any doubt as to the actuality of this conflict between higher and lower, between good and evil? Is it not here, in our hearts within us? We all have our higher and our lower impulses, and the two fight each other. The heathen themselves were perfectly well acquainted with this truth. One scarcely ventures to quote the words of Ovid, with their complete parallelism to Scripture; they are so familiar:—

*"Video meliora proboque,*

*Deteriora sequor."*

"I have a vision of better things, and it commends itself to me, and then I follow my lower instincts." With him, easy going Pagan as he was, there is the call to the battle, but against his better judgment he fails to engage in it. St. Paul says the same thing in sterner tones. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would."

As there is this conflict within us between good and evil, so there are forces without us which help on both the one and the other. To go back to another Pagan writer, Horace. Even he was alive to and admitted the existence of spiritual forces.

*"Fervet avaritia miseroque cupidine pectus;  
Sunt verba et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem.  
Possis et magnam morbi deponere partem.  
Laudis amore tumes: sunt certa piacula quae te  
Ter pure lecto poterunt recreare libello.  
Invidus iracundus, iners vinosus amator;  
Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit."*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Epistles* I. i. 33-39.



Not complete but partial redemption is here spoken of, but it is redemption all the same.

An analogy drawn from natural sources may here be helpful. Here is a student suffering from temporary overwork. He gets up with a headache, and attempts in vain to do his accustomed portion of study. It is a fine morning, the sun shines, the air is fresh and bracing. He puts aside his books, and makes his way to a neighbouring hill, where he rests awhile in the open, and returns refreshed and invigorated. What does all this denote? It means that the man has been in contact with certain physical forces. He may not in the least understand their action, how sun, air and exercise combine to produce health, but he is positive about the result.

Spiritual forces can be put to the same simple test. They do not operate save upon conditions; but these conditions, at any rate to outward observation, may be entirely separate from any particular theological opinion. We see men and women daily growing better before our eyes. Experience teaches them, sorrow softens them, age mellows them. These spiritual forces may elude our observation just as physical forces do in the last resort. Both alike run back into and come forth from an unseen world, the complement of things seen, without which nothing is rational or explicable.

And if forces of good, why not forces of good's correlative—evil? Who has not felt the force of temptation, of subtle suggestion, both from within and from without? As for the evil which is in the world there is one simple test which any man may make of its reality. Let him fight it with all the resources at his command. It will at once begin to fight him. This inevitable outcome may be delayed for a time by gracious manners, a sense of humour, or transparently good intentions, but only for a time. Evil fighting the good is known as persecution. Christ constantly insisted on this fact. "If you serve Me," He seems to say, "I will give you all your hearts can wish, save one thing—popularity"—brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, houses, lands, with persecutions. Have you never experienced any suffering for conscience' sake? Do all men speak well of you? Then you have never been at grips with evil, and you are blind to the struggle which rages all around you.

When Christ spoke in the terms above quoted, He spoke of what He had learned for Himself. At first all marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth, and at the wonderful works He wrought. Gradually the scene changed; the clouds began to rise. Outraged orthodoxy hated the new Teacher for exhibiting it as a creed outworn; the formalists hated Him for revealing their falsehood; the hypocrites hated Him for exposing their greed and sensuality; the multitude turned their backs on Him because He offered them a spiritual kingdom, and not victory over their enemies and material success.

The end of it was death, the death of shame upon the Cross. Christianity sees itself, as it were, concentrated in this one event. The Passion is what bulks most largely in the Gospels; the proof is mere matter of counting chapters and verses. Do the circumstances themselves lend any support to a view apparently so extreme? Many have felt a difficulty in connexion with the death of Christ. This difficulty lies in His shrinking from it, as shown in the mysterious agony in the garden. To the outward seeming, many a brave man has, at the call of duty and conscience, met death with far more calmness—Sir Thomas More for instance. Why was not the best of men also the most courageous? The Gospels say that “He began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled, and He saith unto them, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.’” His followers have always read these words as the prelude to a culminating struggle with the powers of evil. In this conflict Christians believe that their Master was victorious, and that where He conquered they can through Him conquer also.

How shall we rightly regard this death? How shall we rationalise it? How fit it in with our scheme of things? Shall we look upon it as an incident, tragic indeed beyond all others, but yet merely an incident to be paralleled by the deaths of martyrs and heroes of every age and clime and race? But how do we rationalise these martyrdoms and heroisms? If we find the task impossible, the parallelism merely increases our perplexity. There is this additional difficulty. The death of Christ was followed by the greatest outburst of moral and spiritual force which mankind has ever experienced. Christianity, in spite of all its mistakes and sins

and crimes, in spite of all its wanderings from the path marked out by its Founder, is still the most powerful instrument for good in the world, and the only source to which we can look for its regeneration.

If then we are to rationalise Christ and Christianity we must be prepared to think on a large scale. We must not be afraid of a "cosmological creed." The fact that our thoughts find the visible too small and run over into the invisible, must not deter us. In the former book we had something to say about evil and the perversion of man's nature thereby. We saw that it was anomalous, intrusive, upsetting the order and progress of things. Desperate diseases, we are told, require desperate remedies. If we recognise this intrusion of evil, may there not in the fulness of time have been a corresponding intrusion, if we may so phrase it, of good, whereby the lost harmony between man and his environment may ultimately be restored? Not that we must regard this process as thus entirely sudden, and catastrophic; there is what we have called the uniformitarian side as well. The forces of good have always been operating; atonement has been going on from the first; the atonement of Christ on earth began with His first breath. His life, His example, His teaching, His continued existence are all atoning, His followers have their share therein and continue the atoning work, they know the fellowship of His sufferings, but His death is central, a dramatic culmination where love is victorious by being defeated, and life is saved by being lost. In this sense there is such a thing as the cruciality of the Cross.

The Cross is also central because it is the point at which Christian experience naturally begins and to which all Christian experience naturally leads. As the poet sings:

"Or if virtue feeble be,  
Heaven itself shall stoop to thee."

Human virtue is feeble, but Heaven has stooped to it. At whichever end we begin there must be a point where the two ways meet. Heaven and Earth meet in Jesus Christ, in the union of the human and the divine.

Such a creed is obviously beyond logical demonstration, but we may appraise its value by the three criteria of beauty, truth and goodness. As for beauty, its sublimity is beyond comparison;

as for truth, it is at least coherent, and for philosophic reasonableness it offers an explanation, not indeed of all the facts, but of more than any other creed or system which has yet been propounded. As for moral helpfulness, it is again beyond compare; it gives us a religion not only of hope, but of triumph; and here is the vital point. Faith is near akin to courage, it acts on probabilities, it takes risks, and it is never more daring than when it has a vision of moral excellence. It is willing here to make the supreme venture; it trusts in Christ; and with trust comes love, bringing its inward revelation, and further certainty. His power, His love, His merit are all-sufficient.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE STUMBLING-STONE OF THE BIBLE.

CHRISTIANITY is, in a sense, a book-religion. It follows that in the course of our argument reference has repeatedly been made to the Bible. What view ought we to take of that collection of writings known as Scripture or the Bible? In my young days the old view was everywhere around me—that the Bible was homogeneous, all pure gold from beginning to end. It was a strange conception, with the naive simplicity of childhood about it. Protestants, as we saw, had criticised the Catholic Church and Catholic doctrine with ruthless severity; but when they looked at the Bible they were Protestants no longer, but Catholics, quite uncritical and entirely submissive to its authority. Such a state of mind could not last. Criticism has been abroad in the world for a very long time. It is continually showing itself, sporadically and uncertainly in individuals, methodically and systematically among scholars and thinkers, and it has not spared the Bible.

Take, for instance, the case of Mrs. Besant as recorded in her *Autobiography*, as an example of how the critical spirit may suddenly show itself. She there tells us how in order to facilitate her realization of the scenes of Passion Week she resolved to write out a harmony of the four Gospel narratives, with this result:—"I became uneasy as I proceeded with my task, for discrepancies leaped at me from my four columns; the uneasiness grew as the contradictions increased, until I saw with a shock of horror that my 'harmony' was a discord, and a doubt of the veracity of the story sprang up like a serpent hissing in my face."<sup>1</sup> From this small beginning Mrs. Besant went on to a complete rejection of Christianity, and, for the time being, of all religion.

The then existing system of Christian teaching is here more to be blamed than those who suffer through it. Why are young people kept in ignorance of discrepancies which have been known to the

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, pp. 59, 61.



Church from the beginning, and which Christianity has somehow managed to survive? The two chief differences which Mrs. Besant found between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel concerned (1) the cleansing of the Temple, (2) the day on which Christ ate His last meal with His disciples. The Fourth Gospel puts the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of Christ's ministry; the Synoptics at the end of it. The Fourth Gospel puts the Last Supper a day earlier than the Synoptics, on the 14th, as against the 15th of the month. Hence arose a difference in the primitive Church in the keeping of Easter, the Eastern Church keeping it on the 14th and the Western Church on the 15th. The divergence did not prove fatal to the existence of either of them.

Again a very slight acquaintance with the administration of justice teaches us that witnesses may be both truthful and trustworthy, and yet differ in matters of detail, sometimes very curiously and inexplicably. Ordinary experience may also be appealed to. If we discover a man who is uncertain whether he was born on the 1st or the 2nd of April, do we forthwith rush to the conclusion that he was never born at all? Students of the New Testament are agreed that Christ cleansed the Temple and ate a last meal with His disciples. The details about these incidents are legitimate matters of discussion; they do not affect the truth of the main facts. Ought not our young people to be taught these elementary propositions about historical accuracy and not to be fed either explicitly or implicitly with a theory of the Bible which breaks down at the first touch of criticism?

Again, what idea of religion have they, whose belief in it can be blown to pieces by a discrepancy in a date? Not only was it impossible that such a theory of the Bible could last, but it was well that it should not. Just as Roman Catholics would be exceedingly grateful to Protestantism, if they realised what it had done for their own Church, so Protestants should be (and ultimately will be) exceeding grateful to criticism for giving them truer and juster views of the Scriptures. The critics have killed the letter and driven the religious mind back upon the spirit. Human nature instinctively clutches at that which is nearest and easiest; it is literal, materialistic, and is constantly needing to be weaned from its idols.

Father Benson indeed says: "It seemed to me then, and it seems to me still, as if the only hope of really touching and holding the lives of those who live under the stress of sordidness and pressure, lies in what may be called the *materialisation* of religion—I mean the supplying of acts and images on which religious emotion may concentrate itself."<sup>1</sup> But to follow this course means deliberately debasing religion to man's level and abandoning all hope of raising man to a truly spiritual state. And why regard the "sordidness and pressure" as inevitable?

The old view of the Bible was of this literal, materialistic kind. One may regret that the task of replacing it by a truer view could not have been done from inside, just as some in the beginning regretted that Christianity could not be developed inside Judaism, and as many have regretted that the Reformation was not effected inside the Church itself. But reform from within is unfortunately not the principle on which improvements are made in this world. The destructive work has to be accomplished by outsiders; they naturally carry it through without pity or remorse, and in consequence are execrated for their pains. What a storm Strauss's *Life of Jesus* raised in Germany! Perhaps it is not yet quite safe to speak of the good which came out of it and other books like it, but the doctrine of the verbal infallibility of the Bible had to be broken down, and it was as well that the work should be done thoroughly. Naturally much harm has resulted from the methods employed. Those who rooted up the tares did not care if they rooted up the wheat also; some of them, in fact, wished to root up the wheat. The damage and loss to religion still go on, but things are beginning to mend. There is rising a generation who can accept all that criticism has to teach, and yet retain their faith and evangelical fervour; they have penetrated behind the letter back to the life-giving spirit.

What then is the Bible? Before answering that question it may be as well to state briefly what it is not. It is not primarily designed to teach us either science or history or philosophy, or even to furnish material for a system of Theology. If the Christian Church had only recognised this fact from the first, how different

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions*, p. 37.

would have been the history of Christianity. We have spoken recently of the conflict between good and evil. The Bible is in brief the epic of the fight. It begins with a vision of creation when all was good; then evil intrudes and the struggle begins. The story of it follows a strange and devious course, now rising high, now sinking low; nations and individuals are alike involved, defeat and success alternate; victory is achieved by Jesus Christ, and the Bible closes with a second vision, a new creation of a heaven and an earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The keyword to the Bible is goodness. In it goodness is the greatest thing in the world. In the Old Testament it wears the aspect of righteousness; in the New Testament the aspect of love. The aim of the Bible is first and foremost edification, the building up of the soul in goodness and in truth. All else is subsidiary. The Old Testament may be regarded as the most valuable study in the evolution of religion which mankind possesses. It extends over a great length of time, and is set forth with marvellous variety of incident and detail both in poetry and prose. Its range is immense; there are survivals in it of absolutely primitive ideas; it also embodies the loftiest conceptions to which the human soul has ever attained. What a gap, for instance, is there between such a verse as this from the Book of Genesis, "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven"; and this from the prophecies of Jeremiah, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; and this is the new covenant I will make with them; I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be My people." In the first God is a local deity having a material house with a gate to it, the proximity of which inspires terror. In the other He is pure spirit who writes His words "not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh," in the intuitions, and conscience and soul of man.

In the New Testament the Gospels are central; they tell of Jesus Christ to whom the Old Testament looks forward, and the rest of the New Testament looks back.

The practical question then is, How ought one to read the Bible? There are many ways of reading it, and two or three concrete examples of them may here be given. When Dr. Scrivener published his Greek Testament, which some of us were familiar with in our youth, he gave the text from which the Authorised Version had been made, and at the foot of each page the variations from that text as they occurred in the critical editions of Lachmann, Tischendorf and Tregelles. He was concerned mainly with single letters, or words; only occasionally with a whole line or lines. That is one way of reading the Bible, to pay heed to the text only, and this, by the way, is called the Lower Criticism.

There is a second way of reading it. When Ferdinand Christian Baur was preparing his works on St. Paul, he compared the Epistles with one another, noting differences of thought and growth of ideas, and endeavouring to bring the contents of each Epistle into relation with the circumstances under which it was written. This is called the Higher Criticism. It is, in brief, the historical or evolutionary way of regarding the Scriptures. It is possible to read the Bible in both these ways, and to see nothing of its real, that is, of its spiritual, significance, because one is not primarily looking for it. Still less possible is it to see the spiritual significance of the Scriptures if one reads them, say, in the spirit of Voltaire, that is, in order to be clever and sarcastic about them, and to turn them into ridicule.

Nor do we reach the heart of the matter if we regard the Scriptures from the point of beauty merely. Sir James Frazer has made a collection of passages from the Bible which are noteworthy for their literary excellence. But the Bible is more than a collection of what in bygone days were popular under the name of "elegant extracts."

There is a final way of reading the Bible, for the sake of the good that is in it, which, for example, is that followed by Tolstoy's hero, Nehlúdog, in the last chapter of *Resurrection*. True he is only an imaginary character, but we may be certain that the incident is autobiographical, and shows the method which Tolstoy himself followed.

Nehlúdog opens the New Testament at St. Matthew's Gospel. His eye falls on the incident where Christ sets a little child in the



midst of the disciples after their dispute as to who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. “‘*Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*’ ‘Yes, yes, that is true,’ he said, remembering that he had known the peace and joy of life only when he had humbled himself. Then he reads on further, and finds difficulties which puzzle him. ‘What a pity that this is so incoherent,’ he thought, ‘yet one feels that there is something good in it.’ So he continues, and comes to the parable of the unforgiving servant. ‘And is it only this?’ Nehlúdoſ suddenly exclaimed aloud, and the inner voice of his whole being said ‘Yes, this is all.’ And it happened to Nehlúdoſ as it often happens to men who are living a spiritual life. The thought that at first seemed to him strange, paradoxical, or even only a jest, being confirmed more and more often by life’s experience, suddenly appeared as the simplest, truest certainty.”

Tolstoy here insists on all the three essentials of learning. Nehlúdoſ has humility. He feels his ignorance and wants to be instructed. He has patience. He does not fling away the book in disgust because there are what seem to him incoherencies. He has sympathy; he feels there is something good in it, and so he instinctively recognises truth. Yet he offers no violence to his intellect. He notices the difficulties, but certainty comes to him in spite of them.

That is the secret—to press on, always looking for the good. This method, when one comes to think of it, is the same as that followed by Mr. Spurgeon when he read the Bible. He used to say that reading the Bible was like eating fish—you got nutritious mouthfuls, and then you came to a bone; it was wise not to try to eat the bone, but to lay it aside, lest it should stick in your throat and choke you; then having laid aside the bone, you went on with the fish.

This illustration will serve as an answer to those who are terrified by the critical method and who say “If you take anything from us, you take all; how are we to distinguish between what is true and what is false?” Mr. Spurgeon, it may be remarked, was a firm believer in the verbal inspiration of the Bible; that was his theory, and he could imagine no other, but in practice he could distinguish



between fish and bone. My own father and mother nominally held the same theory of the Scriptures (though I think they instinctively felt its inadequacy, without being able to tell why), but did they in practice hold the Bible to be all alike from Genesis to Revelation? No, they had their favourite Old Testament stories, and psalms and prophecies, their favourite passages in the Gospels and the Epistles and the rest of the New Testament; these were what they lived by and made their lives beautiful by. And here are multitudes of Christians asking in bewilderment how they are to do what they are doing already and have been doing all their lives! We judge the Bible to be inspired because it inspires us, because it helps us to live and to mould and fashion our lives to ideals yet unreached. If we read the Bible in this spirit we may find plenty of bones, we may even wonder at what seems their strange profusion, but we shall, in spite of them, find spiritual food.

The Bible then is not a homogeneous whole; on the contrary, it is a collection of very heterogeneous writings composed by different authors with differing degrees of spiritual illumination. The Higher Criticism has not only delivered us from an impossible theory, but it has conferred two positive benefits on us; it has silenced the coarse and shallow criticism which naturally followed from the Bible's being regarded as all of one piece; and secondly, by showing us the gradual growth of spiritual ideas, it has made the Bible a new book of the most absorbing human as well as religious interest.

If the Bible is thus heterogeneous, it follows that we need some standard, criterion, norm, call it what you will, wherewith to appraise the different parts. To supply this want we may recur to what has been said about the central position of the Synoptic Gospels in the Bible. These Gospels show us One possessed of moral perfection, with whom comes knowledge of all the truth needful for man's salvation. Christ is the supreme authority; it is His spirit which is the standard or norm. It is by Him that we judge all the other writers—historians, psalmists, prophets, apostles. For instance, Christ says to us "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven." Suppose we turn to Psalm cxxxvii. and read

it in the light of this commandment? We may sympathise with the writer when asked, in mockery it seems, to sing one of the songs of Zion in a strange land; we may be thrilled with the ardour of his patriotism, and marvel at his expression of it, but can we go with him when he vents his wrath on victorious Babylon: "Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock"?

No, there is a gap between the one spirit and the other, and it is best to recognise it.

Why should we refuse to an Apostle the treatment we mete out to a Psalmist? St. Paul on one occasion, in the heat of controversy, descends to what can at best be regarded as a coarse jest. The fact is discreetly veiled in both the Authorised and the Revised Versions; it cannot be otherwise, for modern taste forbids a literal translation.<sup>1</sup> On other occasions St. Paul soars into the third heaven, and hears words which it is happily lawful for him to utter. His discourse on love breathes the very spirit of Christ, the essence of true religion. Why should we be compelled to say that the two above-mentioned passages are on the same level, when the one is from beneath and the other from above? When plenary inspiration was at stake what a hopeless business it was trying to defend the savage acts and savage words of bygone days. When once we are allowed to take the Bible on its merits, to read it for spiritual aid, to try it by the spirit of Christ, we reap a reward of inestimable value to our souls and we preserve our intellectual honesty as well.

<sup>1</sup> Hulton says, "There is something positively grim in the Eastern ferocity of the wish expressed" (*Essays*, Vol. I., p. 298).

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### ESSENTIAL CHRISTIANITY.

THE Bible then is not homogeneous, but heterogeneous, that is to say, its parts are of different value. A further question then presented itself. How are we to discern and appraise these different values? Our answer was that if Christ is the person we have taken Him to be, His teaching must be supreme for us; it is His words which are spirit and which are life. They appeal to our souls; and in this union of inward and outward we find certainty and our test of worth. Essential Christianity then is Christ's Christianity. What in brief is this?

We are not by any means the first persons who have raised this question. It was really the question raised by Luther and his followers. The Reformation was an attempt to get back to Christ and His religion. It had much success, but not so much as Protestants are apt to imagine. It got back much more nearly to St. Paul than it did to Christ Himself. Protestantism is, broadly speaking, Paulinism. I have in my lifetime heard several thousand Protestant sermons. I have kept no exact account of them, but I should say that at least two-thirds of them were on texts taken from St. Paul's Epistles. We need to go farther back still, to Christ Himself to find real, primitive Christianity.

Here a paradox arises; we must go back, and yet in a sense we cannot. Every religion tends to depart from its primitive simplicity; Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism—are all cases in point. Christ Himself had to break the body of Judaism to liberate its spirit. What is the great, the first commandment? He was asked. What, in other words, is essential Judaism? The reply came in the familiar words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two

commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets." The Reformers tried to do for Roman Catholicism what Christianity ought always to be doing for itself, putting itself alongside its Founder, making Him its norm, its rule, its straight-edge, to put it plainly, and seeing whether or not it is diverging from Him. Yet in another sense we can never return to primitive Christianity; circumstances are not the same; we are not the same. There has been growth in many directions; retrogression, perhaps, in others. Still individuals and institutions alike can strive to be more and more possessed by the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Christianity will of necessity have features in common with other religions. The chief factors in religion we have defined to be God, the soul, and immortality. Other religions have these three, but Christianity treats them in its own way. Let us begin with the soul and its hereafter. If we go to the Church and ask her, she gives us a philosophic basis, the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul; she refers us to Plato and his followers because she has taken her teaching on this point from Greek philosophy; in other words, she tries to prove her doctrine by coercive arguments. These arguments are highly ingenious and carry great probability with them, though it is outside our purpose to go into them. So far as I can judge they have been if anything strengthened by recent psychology. The materialistic argument we know; it is short and simple. We only know thought in connexion with the brain; when the brain disappears, thought and the soul disappear with it. But sub-conscious mental activity is at least open to the interpretation that the mind can carry on certain of its operations by itself apart from the brain, using the brain when it passes on the results of these activities into conscious thought. If the mind can work without the brain now, why not hereafter?

All the arguments, however, from Plato to the authors of *The Unseen Universe*, and so on to the latest refinements, leave most of us with a sense of something still wanting. We should like proofs just a little more conclusive and convincing.

The New Testament everywhere assumes the immortality of the soul, but it nowhere gives us the philosophic doctrine; on the contrary, it seems in one or two places to run counter to it. Thus

the author of the Epistles to Timothy says of God that He only has immortality; and Christ Himself said, "Be not afraid of them which kill the body and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." What Christ and the New Testament give us is not the philosophic but the religious basis for the belief in immortality. When Christ was questioned on this matter He replied that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, because all live to Him, or, in other words, that "beings who have once been the objects of His love must be so for ever."<sup>1</sup> He says the same thing more intimately to His own disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Is not the religious basis better and safer than the philosophic? Nor need the Bible preference trouble us, for in the Bible knowledge is not the chief thing but goodness, and religion naturally comes before philosophy. Those who believe in God can believe also in eternal life.

When Christ was teaching His disciples how to pray, He told them when praying to say "Our Father." If He had never uttered more than these two words He would have left to mankind a possession of inestimable value. To go back for a moment to that ever-recurring problem—the mystery of evil. When our own sins and sorrows, or the sins and sorrows of others perplex us, or even for the time overwhelm us, then the question arises within us, Can God be good? Where can we get an answer? Christ, as we have seen, gives us no philosophical answer, no scientific explanation. Could we understand it if He did? But He gives us a religious answer, and it is just this: "Have faith in God"; "When ye pray, say 'Our Father.'"

But He does not really leave the matter there. To put the facts of the case in their lowest terms, Christ as a person who really existed is part of the sum total of things which either are or have been, and if we would judge the universe rightly and fairly, we must give it the credit of having produced Jesus Christ. As the effect is, so is the cause. If Christ was good, God is good, and the words are true "He that has seen Me hath seen the Father." We can never get further in the argument for the goodness of God than the goodness of Christ. No book, no Church can add to or substract

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, *Essays*, Vol. I., p. x.



from the force of that proof. If then we can believe in Christ, we can believe in God and call Him Father. The words "Our Father" contain by implication a complete moral system and a complete theology.

God is our Heavenly Father, His world is the unseen world, to which belong the spiritual things which are eternal; He is a spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

This God we must approach, as is most fitting, in a spirit of reverence, for reverence is the native air of religion; and outside it religion can neither breathe nor live.

This God we must desire to have universal sway.

Such is the theology of the Lord's Prayer. The four words "Thy will be done" give us a complete morality and a complete philosophy of life. We are to think of a Being infinitely wise and good. So far from this world being without a plan, there is a place in it for each one of us which we alone can fill, and a work, however humble, which we alone can do. To fill this place, to do this work, to be what God would have us be, such is His will. It is the only conception which fits in with the infinite variety of human capacities, and the infinite variety of human needs. Some have one talent, some two, some ten; but this inequality is only a summons to all to do their best, for where much is given much is required; but where little is given, little is required. There are diversities of gifts and operations, "but the same spirit."

These last words are significant. Many excellent people have thought that doing the will of God means a literal following of Christ's example, that there is only one question we must ask ourselves, and that is what Christ would have done under like circumstances.

An ingenious lady, Mrs. Lynn Linton, once wrote a novel entitled, *The True History of Joshua Davidson*, in which a young man, faithful to the name he bore, tried literally to follow the example of Jesus Christ. He got into very bad company, was much misunderstood, and was finally shot in front of a barricade in Paris when trying to make peace between the Commune and the armed forces of the National Government. The moral was that Christianity was an impossible religion, because it is impossible for

ordinary mortals literally to follow Christ. Most true. Once more we see how the letter kills. There was one will of God for the Saviour of mankind, and that by the nature of the case, was unique. There are as many different wills of God, as there are different human beings, but all the wills are one in the sense that they are all His. Christ said that it was His meat and drink to do the will of His Father in heaven; if we do this same will we are all brethren, and Christ is our elder brother.

The idea of obedience is here, but it is of an obedience rendered directly to God Himself. This word obedience is not welcome to the modern mind whose thoughts run rather in the direction of what is called self-culture and self-realisation. Obedience seems to involve self-sacrifice, self-renunciation. The two conceptions are not as contradictory as they seem at first sight. The bestowal of a certain gift or grace is the first and most obvious sign of God's will concerning us. The call to the artist is to pursue beauty, to the philosopher and scientist to search for truth, to the physician to heal, and so on through all the endless variety of man's activities, but in none of these can effective work be done without self-sacrifice and self-renunciation. As the familiar hymn puts it:

"If in our daily tasks our mind  
Is set to hallow all we find  
New treasures still of countless price  
God will provide for sacrifice."

In every path of life the divine paradox holds good, that he who would save his life, loses it; and that he who loses his life, saves it.

In striving to do the will of God we become aware of our own imperfections and shortcomings, and our consequent need of forgiveness at the hands of God and of our brethren. It is at this point that earth and heaven touch, as it were, and morality passes over into religion. Into this question of forgiveness we have already gone. Let it suffice to add that the Gospel doctrine is one of perfect fairness. We can act towards our fellow men in two ways; we may have mercy on them and forgive them, or we may demand justice, and exact from them the uttermost farthing which justice allows. As we treat others, God will treat us; He gives us our choice between justice and mercy. The merciful are blessed because they will

obtain mercy; those who exact the uttermost farthing will have the uttermost farthing exacted from them.

The gift of forgiveness leads to fear of temptation and desire for holiness. From our own human point of view what so natural as the prayer that we may not be led into temptation? But mere absence of temptation is not enough; perfection of character and deliverance from evil is the final goal. Such is in brief Christ's Christianity as embodied in the Lord's Prayer.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE SAME (CONTINUED).

WE may now turn from the positive side to the negative, and seek an example of what Christ condemned. Newman, as we have seen, admitted that he had difficulties about the worship of the Virgin Mary as practised by the Roman Catholic Church, and he recognised that this worship constitutes one of the great obstacles in the way of Protestants accepting the claims of that Church. Mariolatry (if we may employ without offence that convenient though technically inaccurate term) is to be found in germ in the Gospels themselves; it was known to and condemned by Christ Himself. In St. Luke we read, "And it came to pass, as Jesus said these things, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the breasts which Thou didst suck. But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

This passage does not stand alone. St. Mark has this incident: "And there come His mother and His brethren; and, standing without they sent unto Him, calling Him. And a multitude was sitting about Him; and they say unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren seek for Thee. And He answereth them and saith, Who is My mother and My brethren? And looking round on them which sat round about Him, He saith, Behold, My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and sister and mother."<sup>1</sup> The teaching in both cases is the same. Religion is doing the will of God, hearing the Word of God and keeping it. It is first inward and spiritual and then outward and practical. With Christ, spiritual relationship is everything, physical relationship is nothing, even with His own mother. To glorify the physical relationship as the Church did when it invented the title "Mother of God" (with bitter consequences to itself) is to

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew has the same incident.

go contrary both to the positive command and to the whole spirit of Christ's teaching. If it comes to a choice between obeying Christ and hearing the Church, Protestants must obey Christ.

Christ on one occasion laid down the principle that what God has joined, man ought not to put asunder. The correlative doctrine holds true that man ought never to join what God has put asunder. Religion ought to be kept free from all admixture of superstition, magic and materialism. Mariolatry, we have said, is a technically incorrect term. The Roman Catholic Church delights in verbal distinctions which are either non-existent or impossible in actual practice, witness the distinction between venial and mortal sin, attrition and contrition, merit *de congruo* and merit *de condigno*. So it carefully distinguishes between *latreia*, the worship paid to God, *douleia*, the worship paid to the Saints, and *hyper-douleia*, the worship paid to the Virgin Mary. Verbally and technically it keeps itself free from idolatry, but with many Roman Catholics the Virgin Mary is their working divinity, such *latreia* as they are capable of goes to her, or in some cases to some favourite Saint. How can such facts be reconciled with monotheism? They are polytheistic in spite of all verbal defences against them.

How is magic to be defined? The essence of it is, that by the use of the right word, or the doing of the right thing, it compels the action of supernatural forces without regard to any other consideration. If one says "Open, barley," the door remains closed; if one says, "Open, sesame," the door flies open of necessity; the right formula has been used. Bearing this definition in mind, let us enter a Roman Catholic Church. The first object which attracts our attention is a stoup of holy water. "Holy water," says Schouppe, "is only common water mixed with a little salt and sanctified by the prayers of the Church. By virtue of these prayers holy water procures for us grace, which disposes us to contrition and the remission of our sins. When used with faith and devotion it chases away the devil, averts sickness and other troublesome accidents, and even remits venial sin when properly used to those who repent of it, and who are also in a state of grace."<sup>1</sup> What a strange mixture of religion and magic!

<sup>1</sup> *Abridged Course of Religious Instruction*, p. 405!



Hard by the door stands the font for the administration of baptism. The effects of baptism, according to our author, are three: (1) the remission of all sin, both original and actual, and also of all the punishments due to sin; (2) the infusion of sanctifying grace, accompanied by the three theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity; (3) the impression of the character by which the baptised person becomes the adopted son of God and His heir, a member of Jesus Christ, and of His Holy Church. When Jesus Christ was baptised He then, say the Fathers, “by contact with His divine flesh, communicated to the waters the virtue to sanctify our souls.”<sup>1</sup> Here there is more magic and less religion.

When we approach the High Altar we come to the greatest instance of all. It is a lamentable example of the way in which Christians are separated that what is to Catholics of all rites “the holiest, the most august, and the most admirable,”<sup>2</sup> is to Protestants the most superstitious. Here is the Sacrament “which contains really and substantially, under the appearance of bread and wine, the living Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; that is, Jesus Christ Himself in His entirety, in His humanity, and in His Divinity, as He sits in heaven at the right hand of His Father. . . . The changing of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is effected by the words of consecration . . . viz. ‘This is My Body. . . . This is My Blood.’ These words have the divine virtue of effecting the prodigy of transubstantiation.”<sup>3</sup>

We have here a piece of pure magic. When the priest says the right words, “the prodigy of transubstantiation” must needs follow. The beliefs of the celebrant, his moral conduct, his religious state matter not the least. He is the right person and has said the right words, and the effect follows as of course. Newman discusses this doctrine of Transubstantiation in his *Apologia*.<sup>4</sup> “For myself, I cannot indeed prove it, I cannot tell *how* it is; but I say, ‘Why should it not be? What’s to hinder it? What do I know of substance or matter? just as much as the greatest philosophers, and

<sup>1</sup> *Abridged Course of Religious Instruction*, pp. 185, 186, 187.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* pp. 194, 195, 197, 199.

<sup>4</sup> pp. 239, 240.

that is nothing at all.' The Catholic doctrine leaves phenomena alone. It does not say that the phenomena go; on the contrary, it says that they remain; nor does it say that the same phenomena are in several places at once. It deals with what no one on earth knows anything about, the material substances themselves."

This is a very startling argument in the mouth of one who made faith an intellectual act, and its result knowledge, because it connects belief not with knowledge but with ignorance. If we once admit that ignorance is a valid ground for a belief, where are we to stop? Newman's old antagonist, Charles Kingsley, actually does argue in his playful way for the existence of water babies on this very ground of ignorance. Are there not land babies, and then by analogy may there not be water babies? and as for denying the existence of water babies because we have never seen one, or don't know anything about them, how absurd, and so on. For all that, if we believed in water babies should we not be credulous and superstitious people? Can we not imagine the tremendous force with which Newman himself would have crushed Kingsley's arguments on this point had he chosen to take them seriously? And what are we to say of the people who connected a belief founded on ignorance with the joys of heaven, and a corresponding disbelief with the suffering of hell?

The beginning of superstition is as the letting out of water. Father Benson gives the case of a convert to the Roman Catholic Church who had been accustomed to partake of the Anglican wafer in the Communion. When he for the first time received the Roman Catholic wafer (which I believe is made in precisely the same way), he knew the difference by the taste—one was God and the other was not God. How far back in primitive religion shall we have to go before we can find a savage who recognises Deity by the sense of taste?<sup>1</sup>

Newman grounds his defence of Transubstantiation on the

<sup>1</sup> See *Confessions of a Convert*, p. 133. The convert in question (a Ritualistic clergyman) "almost dreaded his first (Roman) Communion, because he was afraid that he might be tempted to doubt the reality of the change. But the moment the Sacred Host touched his tongue he knew the difference. He told me that never again after that moment did he doubt that hitherto he had received nothing but bread and wine, and that this new gift was indeed nothing but the Immaculate Body of Christ."

distinction which Aristotle drew between the substance of a thing, or the thing in itself, and its accidents or qualities. No one outside the Roman Catholic Church now draws this distinction. But why should Christians go to Aristotle for guidance when their own Master has decided for them? Christ told the Jews that unless they ate the flesh and drank the blood of the Son of Man they had not life in themselves. The Jews objected, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" The disciples, we are further told, took up the same question and discussed it among themselves. They too found it a hard saying, but Christ solved their difficulty by this pregnant utterance: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." We may respect the Roman ground for believing as they do *ut verba Christi vera sint*, that the words of Christ may be true; but His words, He told us, are spirit, and for that reason are life. Why should Protestants be compelled to follow the literal, unimaginative, materialistic West in misunderstanding the metaphorical East?

A friend of mine happening to enter a Roman Catholic Church heard the children being catechised. The lesson was about the sacred host in the tabernacle above the altar. The priest told the children what the Catholic doctrine was, and then added with the greatest emphasis and many repetitions that this doctrine they were to receive with absolute submission, and never to let their reason dwell on it for a moment; other doctrines there might be which they were permitted to reason about, but about this, never, never, never. We may agree that about no article of the Roman Catholic faith is the prohibition so necessary as here. Nevertheless, Protestants may gladly recognise that the death of Christ is central in the worship of the Church of Rome, embodied as it is in the service of the Mass as their supreme rite. On the paramount importance to Christianity of the death of Christ both Catholics and Protestants agree; on the manner in which the benefits of that death are communicated to the individual soul they must perforce differ for the present.

Let us take as our last example the doctrine of merit. The Catholic Church distinguishes two kinds of meritorious works, the first are good works done before grace, which are meritorious

*de congruo*, the second good works done in a state of grace, which are meritorious *de condigno*—a characteristic scholastic subtlety.<sup>1</sup>

I will deal with a matter within my own experience. The last time I was in a Roman Catholic Church in England I read words to this effect which were printed and displayed for all to see:—"If you have been inattentive during the service, give something extra to the collection." The notice set me thinking, and I imagined myself receiving a document of this sort:—

A. I. Tillyard, in account with High Heaven.							
Debtor.				Creditor.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Inattention during service	0	1	0	Extra to collection	0	1	0

But on reflection this way of balancing the two sides did not seem satisfactory. To begin with, had I had exactly a shilling's worth of inattention? That difficulty might perhaps be got over; we know on the authority of the poet that High Heaven rejects the lore of nicely calculated less or more. Then a worse perplexity came into view: Can there be such a thing as a shilling's worth of inattention during divine service? Is it possible to estimate that little sin to which we are all so liable in terms of pounds, shillings and pence? May not this be like trying to reckon the height of St. Paul's Cathedral in ounces? And how about that extra shilling? If I can spare it, ought I not to give it in any case? and if I have not given it, will not my account with Heaven be on the debit side—to inattention during service, 1s.; to amount withheld from collection 1s.; total, 2s.; and credit side nothing? This is very disquieting. And then again supposing this to be the true, the infallible, the divine way of reckoning, if I have a shilling in my pocket, I can have my shilling's worth of inattention at my ease, and my poor brother kneeling next me, who has no shilling in his pocket, must attend to what is going on at his peril. In other words, the God who sells shillings' worths of inattention is of necessity one god for the rich and another god for the poor, a terrible conclusion to come to. So when I stood in St. Peter's at Rome and looked round me,

<sup>1</sup> It is a striking example of how one excess occasions another that Article XIII. of the Church of England, which treats of good works before grace, has these words: "Yea rather, for that they are not done as God has willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin"—one of the most monstrous theological propositions on record.



and thought of the old story of Tetzal and Luther, I said "This is a very splendid church for those who like the style of architecture, but was it worth to the Church of Rome what it cost to build, and, above all, is it dedicated to the worship of the true God?"

Catholics and Protestants alike agree in referring man's salvation in the last resort to God's mercy or grace, *i.e.* God gives and man accepts; God does everything, man nothing. Catholics contrive to run a doctrine of merit on man's side along with this doctrine of everything on God's side, and nothing on man's side. "Merit is the fruit of grace, in this sense, that grace renders us capable of producing works that are meritorious in the sight of God.<sup>1</sup> . . . There is a distinction to be made between the merit of right, *de condigno*, and the merit of fitness, *de congruo*. The former implies a strict right to reward; the latter a certain suitableness worthy of consideration, but not a claim of strict justice."<sup>1</sup> Protestants find a great difficulty in going into God's presence with "a claim of strict justice." They would rather not mention justice because there may be claims of strict justice against them. They remember too the words of Christ Himself, "Ye also, when ye have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do." The prayer which we had better keep to at all times and under all circumstances is the prayer of the Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We cast ourselves entirely on the divine mercy, which is what the Reformers meant when they spoke of justification by faith.

The fact is that the doctrine of merit is only Jewish legalism dressed up in Christian clothes which do not fit it. Judaism and all legal religions which teach that man shall live by what he does, part company ultimately and at this root-point with Christianity, which is a religion not of merit but of mercy. The attempt to join what God has put asunder is most ingenious, but a true junction cannot be made between incompatibles.

Once again we are reminded of the two different conceptions of religion, the Priest's and the Prophet's. Merit is pre-eminently Priest's doctrine, and goes well with a magical caste, and magical

<sup>1</sup> Schouppe, *Abridged Course*, pp. 172-173.



sacraments. Priest's religion may also be described as Cathedral religion such as Father Benson speaks of. "The round dome of heaven is brought down to earth; the walls of the world are plain to the sight; its limitations are seen in the light of God; the broad sunshine of Revelation streams on all sides through clear windows upon a gorgeous pavement; angels and gods and men riot together in an intoxication of divine love; the high altar stands plain to view in a blaze of gilding and candles; and above it the round brazen and silken tent of God-made man stands, that all alike may see and adore."<sup>1</sup>

We judge not those who worship thus; and we believe that God is the Father of us all "though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us." Still in one respect we claim kinship with Abraham. Abraham was content with an open-air religion when he went forth from his father's house not knowing where God would lead. The prophets as well as the patriarchs have always liked this same open-air religion, even when they have been but as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. And did not Christ give us an open-air religion? In the Gospels can we not feel a breeze upon lake and hill bringing with it a sense of new-found freedom? But the atmosphere of Cathedral religion as sketched above stifles us, and we cannot breathe in it. It is heavy with the incense, the smoke and smell of candles, and the windows have never been opened since the Church was built, and, worse still, the place is gloomy with the memories of great cruelties and crimes. We must away into the fresh air or we shall die.

Such are some of the leading differences between Protestantism and Catholicism. They are cited here not to stir up a controversy, but in the belief that the frank statement of difficulties is a necessary step towards mutual understanding and ultimate unity.

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions*, p. 153.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE STUMBLING-STONE OF EVIL.

IN this matter of the mystery of evil I have my own private approximation to a solution, and as it has been helpful to me it may be helpful to others. I believe in the immortality of God and of good, but not in the immortality of evil. Herbert Spencer, when he wants to ascertain what good and bad mean, begins with some very homely examples. "In which cases do we distinguish as good, a knife, a gun, a house? And what trait leads us to speak of a bad umbrella or a bad pair of boots? . . . We call these articles good or bad according as they are well or ill adapted to achieve prescribed ends. The good knife is one which will cut, the good gun is one which carries far and true; the good house is one which duly yields the shelter, comfort and accommodation sought for. Conversely, the badness alleged of the umbrella or the pair of boots, refers to their failures in fulfilling the ends of keeping off the rain and comfortably protecting the feet, with due regard to appearances."<sup>1</sup>

None of us will want to quarrel with these sentences, but we may develop the idea a little further. Suppose that the first time we used the articles enumerated above, the knife lost its edge, the gun burst, the house showed great cracks in the walls, the umbrella collapsed, and the boots split. We should assuredly call them all bad, and why? Because they had lasted such a little time. The universal instinct of mankind associates goodness with permanence, and badness with transience, rottenness and decay. "Always buy the best," says the prudent man, "they are the cheapest because they last longest"—a trivial, perhaps a sordid saying, but with a moral significance in it. Slight as it is, it shows the result of the experience of mankind; it is the impression driven deep into their

<sup>1</sup> *Data of Ethics*, p. 21.

mind by contact with the world outside, and therefore shows the lines on which the world is built.

In the natural world evil always carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. Take that mysterious and depressing phenomenon, Parasitism, which shows to us myriads of creatures living at the expense of other creatures which they enfeeble and torment. Speaking of it, Thomson and Geddes say: "It is, after all, not the interest of the parasite to kill its host, or even to deteriorate its life too seriously." Why? Obviously because if it does so, it destroys itself. Disease by killing its victims tends to swallow itself up in its own victory. The good makes for life, the evil makes for death.

The question of course is whether the argument holds good for the spiritual as well as the natural world, whether we can carry the analogy, and so the probability, from the one to the other. Catholic theology and the older Protestant orthodoxy say that we cannot. Evil to them is just as eternal as good. Both alike appeal to Scripture as decisive. But the references in the New Testament to the subject are few, and these few are for the most part expressed in obscure and metaphorical phrases. We may therefore get as far as we can on general principles, and then look at the Scriptures in the light of them.

We have seen that the two great redemptive principles in this world are Love and Fear. Men have to take their choice between the two. For those who choose good, there is love; for those who choose evil, there is fear. But the methods of Love and Fear are different. Love, so to speak, construes itself liberally; it delights to give lavishly, its temptation is to be generous before it is just. Fear, on the other hand, construes itself strictly, because it is punitive; it aims at exact justice, at rendering to every man his due. If we choose love and the good, the promise is of more than we deserve. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." If we choose evil and fear, the prospect is of justice. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God—the all-just as well as the all-loving.

Theologians, going on lines of justice, have admitted that it is impossible for us to earn the infinite happiness of heaven by our

own deservings. They have not hesitated to assert that it is possible for weak, and ignorant man, by simply following the line of least resistance, by doing that which comes most natural and easy to him, to incur the tortures of an eternal hell. When pressed as to the justice of this arrangement, they have said that offenders will be judged by the majesty of Him against whom they offend, and that as God's majesty is infinite, so the punishment of those who offend against it must be infinite also. But earthly justice does not proceed on these lines. There is the same majesty of the English law for the child as for the grown man, but the punishment for the two is not the same; the punishment is according to the guilt of the offender, that the particular factors relative to the individual are taken account of in estimating it. Shall God be less just than man? Christ Himself recognised this principle of different degrees of guilt. The servant who knew his lord's will nor did according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes, while he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. But "few" and "many" are finite terms; they are inapplicable to infinity, which swallows up both "few" and "many" in its fathomless depths. Where much is given, much is required; where little is given, little is required. Thus does Christ recognise natural justice.

By not recognising the claims of justice the Churches have lost the note of fear. They can no longer preach an infinity of suffering for finite offenders, and so cannot preach retribution at all. The thunderbolts of divine judgment flame in their books, but nowhere else; their utility for private consumption decreases daily; in public they cannot be wielded at all. When theology once more recognises the few stripes and the many—that punishment will be according to the capacity of the sinner,—then will it be able again to raise its warning voice.

This question of the eternity of future punishment is a particular aspect of the eternity of evil. Reference has been made to the scanty materials which Scripture gives us for forming a judgment on this difficult point. The favourite expression in the New Testament is "eternal life." The phrase occurs in 44 passages, of which 23 are in the Johannine writings (17 in the Gospels, 6 in the

other books). The phrase "eternal punishment" occurs but once in the Gospels (Matt. xxv. 46), where the words are *κόλασις αἰώνιος*. Other Gospel phrases are "eternal fire" (twice in St. Matthew), and "eternal judgment" (once in St. Mark), St. Luke and St. John have not the word. The poetic word for retributive justice (*ποινή* Lat. *paena*) does not occur in the New Testament. The prose word *δίκη* occurs twice, once in St. Paul (2 Thess. i. 9), "Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord," and once in Jude 7, where Sodom and Gomorrah are spoken of as "suffering the punishment of eternal fire." The dominant note is eternal life, punishment is an undertone.

It is noteworthy too that the Gospel word is *κόλασις*, corrective punishment, or that which aims at the moral improvement of the offender, while for children in the Father's house the word is *παιδεία*, translated chastisement, but also meaning education. As for the adjective *αἰώνιος*, it should be remembered that not only do adjectives qualify substantives, but substantives qualify adjectives. *αἰώνιος* is the adjective of *αἶων*, which means an age, and indefinitely long period which may yet have an end. Thus in the Gospels we read of "the present age" (or world) and "the end of this age" (or world). That, then, which runs its full time, or accomplishes its purpose completely can be called *αἰώνιος*, and a chastisement which resulted in the complete and lasting amelioration of the offender could be called an eternal chastisement.

Still when all these qualifications have been made it must be admitted that the letter of Scripture, if it is pressed, may be read in favour of the orthodox doctrine of the eternity of future punishment. The Jews themselves held this doctrine, and the teaching of Christ has come to us through a Jewish medium. If the Gospel of St. John represents the inner spiritual teaching of Christ, the absence of all allusion to punishment is especially striking.

Then again the New Testament was written in a period of great strain and stress. The Church was persecuted from the beginning; and persecution, though it purifies the corporate life, is very trying to the individual temper. There is a well-known passage in Tertullian which describes the future sufferings of the foes of Christianity. There was probably something of Tertullian's spirit



before his day, and those who found the tender mercies of the wicked to be exceeding cruel in this world naturally depicted another in which their tormentors suffered to the full.

Against the terrible language of Scripture must be set those passages which show the inner spirit of Christianity and which speak of the final triumph of good, notably those verses of St. Paul: "Then cometh the end, when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. And when all things have been subjected to Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all." The broad sense of this passage surely is that the existence of evil is an interlude in the history of things, and that redemption is an interlude also, itself ceasing with the destruction of evil, and the everlasting victory of the good. At any rate in a question of the highest difficulty and perplexity, where so much is obscure, we may at least abstain from dogmatism, and "trust the larger hope" as best we can.

Here, then, is the point in which natural religion differs most from traditional theology, for most of the great Christian doctrines, hints, suggestions, and analogues can be found in the natural order of things; but the eternity of evil, so far as I can see, can find no such basis. If then good is immortal and evil transitory, the deepest mystery of life, if not solved, at least assumes a less formidable aspect.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE STUMBLING-STONE OF THEOLOGY.

THEORISING has an irresistible attraction for the human mind. "We find ourselves," says Mr. Bertrand Russell, "in an open world of free possibilities, where much remains unknown because there is so much to know."<sup>1</sup> The unknown is what fascinates us. Even if there are arguments to prove that the unknown is also the unknowable, we are not thereby deterred. We seek to gain a foothold by speculation and imagination. To quote Mr. Russell again, we are to be commended for so doing. "There are many questions which, so far as we can see, must remain insoluble to the human intellect. . . . Yet, however slight may be the hope of discovering an answer, it is the business of philosophy to continue the consideration of such questions, to make us aware of their importance, to examine all the approaches to them, and to keep alive that speculative interest in the universe which is apt to be killed by confining ourselves to definitely ascertainable knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

Imagination has its part to play in religion as well as in philosophy. Men will strive to enlarge and clarify their ideas about God, the soul and the future life. But it is plain that they ought not to let their imaginations run riot. Speculation must, so far as it is possible, be subjected to the three criteria of empirical truth. Some speculations may have a high degree of luminous self-evidence. Others may show signs of philosophic reasonableness in so far as they are coherent in themselves, and analogous to what is definitely known. All of them ought to be morally helpful. This is the great criterion. For the sake of moral helpfulness we may dare much, remembering that no theological proposition, however venerable, however strongly attested by authority, how-

<sup>1</sup> *Problems of Philosophy*, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* pp. 241-2.

ever widely accepted, is really our own unless it aids us in our moral and spiritual life. It remains apart, a mere opinion, unless it influences our conduct.

Take, for example, the character of God. What are we to think that God is like? In this subject, which is so full of difficulty, our chief criterion must be that of moral helpfulness. The conception of God which we attain to by the process described in the former volume—that of increasing to infinity all human excellencies and eliminating all human imperfections—carries with it one great stumbling-block—it makes the Deity extremely abstract and remote. Much is needed to bring the thought of Him near to our hearts. The God of Theism is too distant for daily use.

Judaism got over the difficulty by, as it were, reducing the size of its Deity. Nominally He may be the God of the whole earth, in reality He is the God of one special people—the Jews—exactng special services from His sons and daughters, but giving in return special privileges and blessing them both in basket and in store.

Mohammedanism frankly believes in and emphasises this remoteness of the Almighty. He is a magnified Sultan dwelling apart, doing as He pleases, whose decrees are inscrutable, and to be accepted without inquiry into their moral nature. When *Candide* asked the Mullah at Constantinople what view he took of the ills and perplexities of this mortal life, "If the Sultan," answered the Mullah, "were sailing from hence to Egypt, what would he care about the thoughts of the mice that might infest the ship?"

But the idea of God, if it is to be of any use to us, must not be abstract and remote. There must be warmth in it, or there will not be life in it. Even the statement, beautiful as it is, that God is love, will not suffice. We bethink ourselves of what loving involves. Obviously an object. Love cannot stream aimlessly into empty space. It must encounter something on which it can expend itself. Love too demands love in return; this is its essence and nature. Nor can it be satisfied without a return from what is equal with itself. A shepherd may love his dog, and the dog may return his master's affection, but the shepherd cannot satisfy his heart in this way; he craves love like his own, human love, the love of wife, and child and friend. One of the saddest sights in this world is that of

men and women who, having no full and natural outlet for their affections, lavish them on dumb animals.

If then we may argue from our own case, it follows that we must think of God as having loved and been loved from all eternity by one who is His own equal, for thus alone could His love be satisfied. It may be objected here that such an assumption destroys the unity of the Godhead. The reply is that the idea of God is so vast that we must be prepared for contradictions in it—that God means the supreme reality in which all contradictions are reconciled.

The object and giver of this love is represented in the Creeds by the second Person of the Trinity. The Christian Church believes that this Person was manifested and incarnate in Jesus Christ. Here imagination soars utterly beyond reason; but if we can accept the view that this world is the scene of a conflict between good and evil, and that Jesus Christ is strong enough completely to destroy evil and banish it from the universe, then we assign Him a power which belongs to God alone. Experience too shows us that those who hold Christ to have effected a real atonement, a real redemption, of necessity cling to and rest in His divinity; while those who reject the doctrine of the Atonement and come to look upon Him merely as the supreme Exemplar and the supreme Teacher, thus tend to minimise the divine in Him and not unfrequently abandon it altogether. For practical purposes the Atonement and the Divinity of Christ hang together. The identification of Jesus Christ with the eternal object of the Father's love is the most wonderful feat of imagination in the world, and of its supreme moral helpfulness there can be no question.

If we concede that the idea of God is so vast that apparent contradictions in it need not disturb us, we may be emboldened to go a step further. The idea of personality undoubtedly presents great difficulties to many minds. Yet it must at all costs be retained. It is too valuable, too much hangs on it for us ever to let it go. We must think of God as conscious, as knowing and loving and ruling. But we need not in consequence negative another view—contradictory, it may seem, but still helpful. The idea of God as immanent is much more helpful to some than the idea of

God as transcendent, God dwelling in all things and in a way not separable from them, rather than above all things.

Now if one asks people who try to make the doctrine of the Trinity practically helpful in their religious life, what their chief difficulty is, they generally reply—the Personality of the Holy Spirit. They find that Personality but vaguely expressed in the Scriptures, or in the early theology which was deduced from the Scriptures. Personality itself, as we have seen, if exalted infinitely high tends to remoteness. The omnipresence of God is exceedingly difficult to think of in terms of personality. The theologians tell us that for the Deity time and space do not exist; that He dwells in an eternal now, and that all things are equally present to Him. Such words and thoughts have the quality of sublimity, and so may elevate the soul, but they rather increase than diminish this sense of remoteness. May we then think of God in terms of diffusion, so to speak, as well as of concentration, which personality implies, in terms of the circumference as well as of the centre?

The Father, says the Creed, is neither made nor begotten; the Son is not made but begotten. Now, making and begetting are personal acts, and bring with them the idea of personality. The Holy Spirit, continues the Creed, is neither made, nor begotten, but proceeding. Proceeding, on the contrary, is impersonal, rather than personal. We think of light and heat proceeding from the sun, and spreading through and permeating space. Following this analogy we may think of the Holy Spirit as being God in terms of diffusion, and so being as real and near to us as the light and the warmth of the sun.<sup>1</sup> The New Testament has a striking phrase about the Deity as Him “in whom we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts xvii. 28). God is here conceived of not as immanent in us, but we are conceived of as immanent in Him, surrounded by Him on every side, breathing, moving, living in an atmosphere of Divinity. We thus enlarge our idea of God and of personality. Why should we not strive to think of personality as everywhere diffused, conscious, living, loving, indwelling? We must, however,

<sup>1</sup> Such a conception may remind us of what was said in the previous volume, that if the evolution formula is a key to the scale of being, God is the supreme heterogeneity as well as the supreme definiteness.



recognise how human all this thinking is, how tentative, how unjustifiable even, save from the moral side, and we shall forbear from making our imperfect and necessarily contradictory thoughts into a creed binding on all, and from consigning those who cannot receive it to everlasting misery and punishment.

As men have speculated about God, so have they speculated about Jesus Christ. The Church worked out what it deemed to be a complete explanation in the theory of the one person and the two natures. It was in connexion with this theory that Newman discovered he was a Monophysite, or a believer in one nature only. He apparently escaped being a Monothelite, the companion heresy of those who believed that Christ had only one will.

The difficulty of modern times goes farther back, and is more elementary. Is it possible to believe in a divine element in Jesus Christ, and if so, how could it subsist with the human element? There are two views which are current in present-day theological thought. The first is called the infusionist or inspirational view. It may be illustrated by a verse in St. John's Gospel (iii. 34): "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for He giveth not the Spirit by measure." Here Christ seems to be spoken of as receiving an unmeasured outpouring, infusion, or inspiration of the Spirit of God, whereby He was able to speak the words of God.

The other view is much more common in the New Testament; it is the personal view, that Christ had a separate personality from all eternity, and that this person took our flesh, our human nature, and dwelt among us. It appears strikingly in another passage of St. John's Gospel (viii.): "Before Abraham was (or was born), I am." Nothing could well be more inexplicable than this view,—that an infinite being could get rid of its infinity as it were and become in any sense finite. We can only fall back upon the moral helpfulness of the idea as proved by experience. It is the one supreme all-helpful conception, though its intellectual difficulty is in the same proportion.

There are two things which nearly twenty centuries of Christian experience have made plain. The first is that the human element in Jesus Christ must be firmly grasped and retained if He is really to be helpful to us. The more the Church theologised about Jesus

Christ when it was elaborating the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, the more remote He grew, until He became altogether too remote, and His place in practical life was taken by His mother. We must go back and know Christ again after the flesh, even though an Apostle can attain to a height where he needs no longer so to know Him. At the same time we must think of Christ as in essence all-divine, or He can be no full and true revelation of God to us, nor make atonement for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. We think of Him then, in a practical way, as the meeting-point of the human and the divine. "For there is one God, one mediator between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all." In this simple creed we may find that all our needs are met, and this will be the best evidence to us of its truth.

Here, then, is the end of our long pilgrimage. Theology has been reached and finds its place, but it is at the termination and not at the beginning of the way. Some there may be who will not discern the revolutionary character of these pages, nor the magnitude of the work which has been attempted. It is no light task to take the Christian religion and turn it completely round, but this we have tried to do, and in so doing one more attempt has been made to get back to the Christianity of Christ. Christ made goodness the chief thing: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness." Goodness leads to truth, and truth is valuable as it leads to goodness. If the accent can be placed on goodness, as it is in the Gospels, the divine music may sound once more in the ears of an unthinking world. Christianity may be shown afresh to meet the deepest needs of man, and the highway be opened to Christian unity.

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